

**THE COMPLETE HISTORY OF
THE NINJA**

(THE UNTOLD STORY)

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the Tanaka-ryu line, whose self-sacrifice and teachings are a driving force in my life. In addition, I'd like to thank my parents, and all my students who helped me compile and document those facts which make this text solely unique in its completeness, an historical account of the Ninja society from its inception to the present.

Special thanks is given to my mentor Senzo "Tiger" Tanaka, whose friendship and skill guided me to a point of enlightenment. His tutelage gave me purpose and meaning--I am Ninja.

Frank Dux

FOREWORD

I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Foreign Area Studies group of the United States Army; the Superintendent of Documents-U.S. Government, Princeton University Press; John Whitney Hall (Medieval Japan: Essays In Institutional History) Yale University, to name but a few of many whose cooperation and availability as sources of information made this book possible.

The vast wealth of the knowledge contributed to this book make its content unlike others, since its historical facts are substantiated. This is in direct contrast to other authors and self-proclaimed 'authorities', whose primary (if not only) information resource seems to be oligarchical essays.

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this book is to present information in a clear and accurate manner. Within that, I will strive to be free of bias unlike many others today who write as 'outsiders' promoting myths based on assumption, or practitioners whose only interest is to promote only themselves or their clan/ryu and not the art as a whole.

WHAT IS A NINJA?

To answer the question, "What is a Ninja?" it would probably be a good idea to begin by erasing some of the negative notions that already exist about the term. However, to merely say that a Ninja, for instance, is NOT an assassin, a terrorist, or a fictional, evil character relegated to mythical history really says too little regarding the rich tapestry that is woven into the condition.

In other words, to tell what something is not, only creates an illusion of understanding, like focusing on a person's shadow to try and picture his appearance. This book is dedicated to adding light to the shadow of the myth, to give the reader a realistic vision of what is a Ninja .

To begin then, one must understand that to be Ninja is not merely to know the meaning of a few words. Words, as Ninja training emphasizes, are easily bent to the meaning of any time, place or narrow purpose. Even today, in Japan, where the art of the Ninja was born, the word "Ninja" is revered, respected, but never spoken. It is understood, that the secret of being Ninja is, according to ancient teaching, "in the doing."

Traditionally, the various styles of Ninjitsu (specific

methods of becoming Ninja) epitomize the very best training and technology of all the martial arts, but are not closely related to any one art. Ninjitsu, in fact, is not thought of as a martial art at all, but as a 'martial science'. It was the first combat training that recognized that every martial art has something to offer. All arts have strong and weak points. The science of Ninjitsu was to weed out the weaknesses of each style and keep the strengths, without regard to outdated rules and regulations.

This doesn't mean that the Ninja are without morals. Just being good in martial abilities doesn't make one a Ninja. Becoming Ninja is adopting a total way of life, bound by strict moral and ethical codes. The goals of Ninjitsu training are the attainment of efficiency on three levels: spiritual, mental and physical. However, acceptance of the precepts of Ninjitsu is not the same as adopting a religion. To make this distinction completely clear, let us dissect the requirements of becoming Ninja and examine its main parts separately as well as how they relate to the whole. When this explanation is completed, only then will one be able to understand the significance of the people whose true history is about to be revealed.

Spiritual Training:

One of the greatest misconceptions about the Ninja is that they receive no spiritual training. The reason that this picture was painted, regarding Ninja indoctrination,

is probably due to the unusual character of the spiritual beliefs themselves.

There are, in fact, two basic philosophical guiding principles in the major Ninjitsu styles. The first and major overriding belief is that of the Koga-Alliance. This is the purest and original Ninja style and teaching. The concept here is that there is a "Source" that deserves worship. One must attempt to find a way to worship the Source, but that "way" is up to the individual. Koga-Ninja are not dogmatic about their spiritual beliefs. Therefore, they have been accused of being devoid of spirituality, when in fact they are merely devoid of dogmatic religious doctrine. Leaving the individual free to discover ones own spiritual beliefs, be it Shinto, Buddhist, Christian, Jewish, etc.

The second most popular belief in the various Ninja styles is derived from Shingen Buddhism. The Iga-Ninja teachings follow this sect closely. They adopted the Buddhist beliefs in the late 16th century after a prior cultural split took place between them and other Ninja clans. The Iga were isolated and adopted Buddhist ideas and teachings as a form of protection, as detailed in "The History" section of this book.

All official Ninja training (either Koga or Iga) begins at birth. In some respects training actually starts with conception. To explain this we must only look at the fact that a true Ninja mother always chooses the time of her child's birth by plotting the time from inception to

delivery. In Ninja fashion then, nothing is left to chance. After the mother is certain that she is pregnant, she doesn't wait for delivery to begin the training of her child. She begins by speaking to the womb, telling Ninja stories and talking about techniques.

The belief that the undeveloped fetus can learn is so strong that, in a Ninja household, birthdays are not celebrated on the anniversary of delivery, but on a day six months prior to the birth.

On the day of delivery the child is washed off, fondled and taken care of in a meticulous fashion. Male Koga children are circumcised, which may help prove that Ninja custom leads back (at least in part) to non-asiatic sources.

From the moment of birth to age four, a Ninja child never leaves his parents side. Here he or she receives constant, positive affection. Later, when the adolescent or adult Ninja (as instruction dictates) tries to make decisions without regard to ego, it is felt that they will be better able to do so because they did not lack affection at an early age. Their needs in this area, in other words, will already be met.

Throughout the life of a Koga-Ninja, the individual is further guided toward four spiritual/mental goals. These goals are presented as the "four things to perfect in ones life." They are: 1) Benevolence, 2) Courage, 3) Valor, and 4) Wisdom.

Beyond being benevolent to those in need or to ones

friends, the Ninja strives for benevolence even to his enemies. In a manner that resembles the Christian ethic of turning the other cheek, the Ninja vows to show mercy in battle if mercy is an option.

The perspective on courage also goes beyond the simplest notions of the word. In the Ninja view, to be courageous is to always take on new frontiers and meet new challenges. This is especially true on the social level. For instance, when the Samurai were working toward keeping the status quo (and the lower classes at the Samurai's command) the Ninja worked toward social equality.

In terms of valor, the Ninja view comes closest to the textbook meaning of the word. A Ninja is taught, and grows to accept this position without question, that even in the face of overwhelming odds, one meets his most minor of obligations. This includes social obligations not ordinarily considered on an ethical level, such as paying ones bills on time. Another example of Ninja-valor would be feeding elderly or young members of a family before feeding oneself. Only when a Ninja is certain that all the others he has assumed responsibility for have been fed, would he consider satisfying his own hunger. This is in contrast to the samurai who killed female children in times of famine.

The last of the "four things to perfect" is wisdom. This means that one always tries to act out of logic and not emotion. A Ninja thinks and decides when to act. When he decides, his actions are methodical, cold and without passion. He does not use his skill to accomplish goals of

the flesh or those born out of anger.

Within all this there is the belief that Knowledge is power. A Ninja always acts out of and seeks knowledge. He always shows himself to be a student of life and is never content to keep the status quo. Above this, he strives to know when improvement is impossible and learns, therefore to work within the system at hand.

The attainment of these four goals is not promoted until formal instruction begins. At childhood, however, every future Ninja is taught to memorize nine principles. This is the foundation of the spiritual teachings. These same principles have been adopted by others, including Miyamoto Musashi in his "Go Rin No Sho" or "Book of Five Rings." These spiritual beliefs are based on moral and ethical codes which overlap into the mental and physical training.

The first is: "Do Not Think Dishonestly." Included in this first principle is the admonishing to always be frank with oneself. A Ninja knows he cannot make excuses for his behavior, because the fruit of his life is translated in terms of cause and effect. To grow, one must be truthful with oneself first, and then with those who surround us. A good translation of this principle can be seen in a person who makes excuses for his smoking rather than giving up what he knows is a bad habit.

The second principle that young Ninja must memorize is: "The Way Is In The Training." This ethic is taught to guide one to dedicate themselves to the training. It is realized

that if you don't put anything into training, then you certainly won't get anything out. On the larger scale it is seen that success in life depends upon experiences. Part of Ninja training says that everyday life is ones training ground. One is taught to look at everything as an exercise in life--both success and failure. However, the harder one works, the better one will be able to assure success, since one will rely on no one but themself.

The third principle to be learned epitomizes one of the central differences between Ninjitsu's teachings and other "martial arts." This is, "Become Acquainted With Every Art." The concept that is stressed here is that everything has value. This does not mean that a person should try and master everything. However, it is believed that when a student understands a system he will not fear it, nor will he fall prey to its strengths IF he has also analyzed its weaknesses.

The fourth concept to be memorized is: "Know The Ways Of All Professions." As much as possible (and taking into consideration the qualifications of principle number three) we should strive to relieve ourselves from dependency on professionals who could easily exploit the ignorant. To this end, one is taught to strive to learn basic concepts of law, health or other professions. This is done in an attempt to eliminate one's dependency on those who we usually rely upon. Another aspect of this principle is that, by understanding the work of those who help us we force them to perform much more effectively. The theory is that an educated audience gets the best performance.

"Distinguish Between Gain And Loss in Worldly Matters" is the fifth principle that is memorized at a young age. Every experience to a Ninja, can potentially be a learning one. For that reason, it is considered similar to a sin to cry over one's mistakes or misfortunes such as losing a job or a personal problem. The core of this principle is the belief that our emotions are the things that really count.

They are energy, and like all energy, the Ninja strives to channel his forces in the most efficient manner.

The sixth principle is one which seems to transcend logic at first glance. It is: "Develop Intuitive Judgement." What the Ninja wants to strive for is a basic understanding of everything. To accomplish this monumental task one must seek enough experiences, at every level of life so that all aspects of life become familiar. At this point, it is believed that a person can rely on this body of past experience to "sense in advance" the outcome of any given moment. An example of this principle in practice is the police officer on the street who is able to rely on his "gut instincts" and arrest a suspect, before his life is put in danger by a hidden weapon. When a Ninja reaches this level of understanding he is able to tell an enemy from a friend, before danger presents itself.

The seventh principle is: "Perceive The Thing Which Cannot Be Seen." Beyond achieving a kind of "sixth sense," the Ninja also strives to remain sensitive to his fellow human being. Much of the training, without this principle of genuine compassion could lead the Ninja to a feeling of emotional separateness from the world. Nothing would be more wrong in Ninja eyes. In other words, "don't become a stone, so cold that you are oblivious to the suffering of others, even their unspoken suffering."

One of the ways to prevent a separateness from our fellow humans is dealt with in the eighth principle, "Pay Attention to Trifles." By this it is understood that often

more is said with a single gesture or in the flicker of an eye, than with 1000 words.

The final of the nine principles is probably the most difficult to achieve, yet it too is basic in the teachings. It is: "Do Nothing Which Is Of No Use." This concept is one that is stressed in both everyday life and in the physical training of Ninjitsu. From the very beginning a student of Ninjitsu is told to examine his life, the time spent on particular tasks, his goals and accomplishments and without emotion eliminate all that is wasteful. In this light it would appear obvious, for instance, that one should never use drugs recreationally. A person should never numb the body, or waste precious time, without good reason. Relaxation, on the other hand is important, but the time spent in that activity should be well planned.

This leads us to an important perspective that Ninjitsu has on the use of ritual. Most martial arts stress the use of "Kata" set movements, like dance routines, to teach concentration and form. The Ninja teach that rituals (and Katas) may serve a purpose, but when they cease to develop or enhance form, then they should be abandoned. A good example that one Ninja practitioner gives about useless teachings, points out that certain moves in some Katas portray the fighting of horses and attacks using a Samurai's pig-tail as a grip. Unless Samurai dress becomes in vogue or horse-back warfare makes a come-back, stressing these kinds of techniques is pointless.

One ritual that Ninja do allow and actually recommend

is called "Kuji-kiri" or "Nine Hands Cutting." This is a series of hand gestures which are combined with certain chanted words. The idea is that this practice will allow the Ninja a moment of respite, a time to re-energize and organize his feelings, while becoming one with the universe. The number nine, it might have been noticed, recurs often in Ninjitsu. The reason for this exemplifies Kuji-kiri's involvement with man's place in the universe. It is because there are nine planets that the number nine finds importance in Ninjitsu. Kuji-kiri is seen (by Koga Ninja) as a process of unifying mind and body and grandly portraying the interrelation of man to his environment.

As an example of how strongly this interrelation is felt, I can only relate to an experience I had with my mentor Senzo Tanaka. One day I came to Mr. Tanaka's home and he looked very sad. I asked him what was wrong and he said that one of our own had left us. I later found out that he was talking about the death of a star. In the paper that day I read that a black hole had been found. I don't know whether he'd read about it, heard it on the news, or whether he'd actually felt it. But, the loss of that star had actually affected him. At first this may sound a lot like "Star Wars," but it should be remembered that the concepts in the Lucas' films were derived from an ancient Japanese collection of books entitled "The Hidden Fortress." These books depict Ninja philosophy in action, and were merely modernized and set in space for the films.

The Kuji-kiri was somewhat altered by the Iga-Ninja after their split with the other clans and their adoption of Buddhist philosophy. These same hand positions were seen by them as a means of selling the idea of training to outsiders. Ninopo Mikkyo's "Kuji Goshin ho" was offered as a new method of protecting oneself from evil. With the Mikkyo alterations, the hand positions were combined with other mudra, mantra and mandalla techniques (gestures, words and graphic depictions of the universe and its laws) in a vow of supernatural power.

Instead of opposing these theories totally as fraud, the Koga sought to show respect for differing opinions. They knew and taught that there is energy in the self and that extraordinary powers could be achieved by diligent efforts. They also taught meditation. However, it was stressed that one should meditate on the important goals in life, such as peace and tranquility of mind, and not on obtaining super-powers.

Again, there was no dogmatism in these spiritual teachings. Everyone, it was understood, was put on earth by "The Source," and we were all made different by intention. For, in our differences we grow. You cannot make a cake with only one ingredient. You need flour, sugar, eggs and heat. The "Heat" in this figurative recipe can be translated to represent "conflict" in the Ninja teachings. The heat makes the cake rise and conflict makes things happen. Our conflicts are life itself. We should revel in our differences. If the sugar wanted to be flour, or the

eggs tried to become like the sugar, then the recipe (our balance) would be disrupted. The Source allows for all creation to see things differently.

Interestingly, the ultimate goals for a Ninja are simple human ones. They strive to have spouse, raise a family and live in peace. They do not seek wealth or power, but happiness through personal growth.

To achieve these ends one must faithfully adhere to the teachings. One must be totally devoid of ego, realizing that nothing said can ever hurt. One must never act out of ego, because to do so is a surrender of power.

Mental Training:

One important thing to remember when dealing with the mental aspects of the training of a Ninja is that the spiritual concepts supply the general blueprint for everything that follows. Afterall, from the beginning the initiate is programmed to remember that "the way is in the training." Therefore, all of the training that we are now going to discuss is undergone with a seriousness and dedication that is almost the equivalent of religious zeal. A Ninja knows that he MUST train that way, otherwise, when his training is needed, it will lack the shine that makes action so perfect that it is almost magical.

One of the first teachings, on the mental level, is that we cannot rely on only one of our senses. From the beginning, the Ninja student is blindfolded, everyday for at least an hour and given tasks to perform that would ordinarily require sight. Such tasks as walking, cooking, tying knots or other work is given to the student until he is completely comfortable with his task while blindfolded as he is using his eyes.

The idea behind this mental stimulation is that by

limiting one sense, our others are allowed to blossom to their full potential. Soon, a student is able to feel the presence of another individual by means of body heat, sound or vibration of air currents as well as they can with sight. It is important to remember that everyone has these abilities locked inside them, however, the average person has let these senses become numb, through lack of use.

It is common, in fact, for a Ninja of advanced training, blindfolded or simply rendered sightless by lack of light, to be able not only to feel people's presence, but to tell how many persons are in a room, their size, age and other facts about them.

Ninja are taught to maneuver in a darkened room, in addition to relying on their senses, by use of mechanical aids, such as sticks or rolling their belts across the floor. The result of all this training is a familiarity with the darkness which enables the Ninja to achieve a sense of being totally at home without his eyes. He can function sightless with great mobility, which gives him a decided advantage in battle.

Example's of how Ninja use this ability is in conjunction with smoke bombs or the natural element, fog. A Ninja knew that when he threw a smoke bomb, his enemy would be momentarily handicapped, because he relied on sight. The Ninja could continue the battle with the same level of expertise and easily defeat his opponent.

There is an ancient story of one Ninja who was being tracked by a great number of Samurai. He decided that he

had to break through enemy lines and he chose his time accordingly. He advanced against the pursuing army at dawn, when a heavy fog had blanketed the land. The army heard him and followed, but he led them into a rice field. He knew that they would have to advance against him in one of two ways. Either they would come through the water (which would give them away) or they would follow the raised mounds that line the paddies. He stayed on the mounds and would only encounter one or two Samurai at a time, instead of dozens. By keeping his sword in front of him, in constant motion, he easily broke through the Samurai's lines and escaped.

Another element of mental training deals with the sense of Compassion. Similar to the Spiritual rule, the Ninja student is taught to seek compassion as a sixth sense. By understanding others, one will be able to search (in a mental sense) the emotions of a person without hearing a word spoken. Ninja know that people can cry without shedding a tear. Today, the equivalent training is learning body language.

This mental aspect of training comes under the heading of Observation Training. Within this training one learned to make an art of Personality Study. It was believed that all human beings fell into one of only sixty to seventy distinct personality types. Today, Ninja are trained to perceive over ninety actual traits. The object of the training was to allow a student to be able to accurately judge what a person would do, before any action was taken.

The techniques of Observation lead naturally to

teachings for Memory Improvement. The way that the Ninja is taught to retain the vast amounts of knowledge he is required to, is usually through association. Rhymes, catch phrases and other methods are used to help trigger the memory on a subliminal level. This allows the Ninja to respond more rapidly to stimulus, without having to think about the proper course of action.

The logical next set of Mental skills taught to the Ninja are Leadership Skills. This is a very important aspect of the training which has its roots in the ancient class struggle. Ninja are always taught how to lead, and especially how to inspire others to action. This trait is a holdover from the era when a single Ninja or small group had to teach a village how to protect themselves in times of danger. The modern film "The Magnificent Seven" is based on a classic Japanese tale which finds its catalyst, in turn, in ancient Ninja lore.

Another aspect of Mental Training deals specifically with Combat Psychology. It is understood by the Ninja that (as General Patton put it) "one does not defeat the weapons of war, but he defeats the man." If the weapons are constantly changing, it is reasoned to be better to concentrate on the human condition and learn to use this knowledge to one's advantage. One of the central teachings on this subject is that "the weak find justification for their fears through superstition."

An excellent illustration of the application of this idea is seen in the story of Noboribetsu, a Ninja of the

Koga Bisen group. He was being tracked by two or three hundred Samurai, because he'd killed a local Diamyo. He knew that his pursuers were travelling in three columns. One group was close behind and the other two were at a distance. He also knew that this large a group needed vast quantities of water for themselves and their horses. He, therefore, led the first column into an area that had only one water source, a well. He then poisoned the well. The first column arrived, drank and died. He then decapitated the bodies of both the men and animals and cut the remaining parts to pieces. He saved only a few horses and sent these parts of bodies back on these animals. It appeared as if this single Ninja had defeated an entire column of eighty Samurai by the use of his sword. The others chose to believe the impossible, rather than go any farther and look for alternatives.

It is for this reason that all Ninja are taught the strategy of disguising their methods of operation. If a Ninja wins a battle with a sword, then he makes it appear as if he used a knife. He doesn't want his enemies family or friends sending better swordsmen against him.

Additionally, a Ninja will generally make his actions look as if there is something more involved in an enemies destruction than a contest of martial skills. Vengeance is made to look like robbery, and a single Ninja will carry several pairs of shoes and walk with varying steps to succeed in this disquise (making Samurai think several were involved versus one man).

The high level of concentration needed to accomplish Ninja feats is taught through meditation. As we have already discussed, the Kuji-kiri (9 hands cutting) techniques are performed at an early age as a process of unification of mind and body. This meditation practice also aids the Ninja in learning concentration. Often the student is directed to study an object for hours and then to be able to describe another at a glance. This combination of meditative practices allows a Ninja to focus his mind, when necessary and to tell what is seen with only a glance. This too is applied to the Ninja's dealings with people.

One technique that is used to achieve this level of concentration is having the young Ninja sit under the pounding waters of a waterfall, in lotus position and perform the Kuji-kiri. Success is achieved when the waterfall cannot be felt. This technique has the added benefit of teaching the Ninja to endure pain through meditation, as well.

Pain Reduction, in fact, is a whole mental study in itself. The process for being able to deal effectively with pain encompasses both physical and mental orientation for the student. Ninja are taught to view pain differently than ordinary people through physical methods. Students are directed to take a small, metal ball and push it, hard into their own stomachs. Eventually, the ball can be thrust all the way into the stomach without being felt. Ninja are also taught to kick trees and take severe beatings, dealt out by the instructors. Experience teaches the Ninja that a simple

flinch reflects that kind of break in concentration which can make all the difference between life and death, success and failure.

During a traditional masters test, Ninja initiates are cut with razors and salt is sprinkled on the wounds. The initiate is not allowed to flinch or one fails the test. It is important to note that Ninja take special care to prevent scarring of their bodies. The preservation of the body, intact, is thought of as an almost sacred matter.

The Art Of Persuasion is another mental study that Ninja must master. This includes elements of self persuasion (hypnotism) or persuasion of others (psychological hypnosis). This is emphasized in a Ninja's training to help him learn ways to break his opponents concentration and weaken him. An understanding of the psychological effects of color comes into play here. It is because of this understanding that Ninja wore dark blue/black, allowing a Ninja to easily conceal himself in the night and appear suddenly, conveying an image of unequalled ferocity.

At this point in the training, Ninja learn to apply knowledge of mind altering drugs, to enhance the effects of hypnotic suggestion. This knowledge is learned during the broader study of chemistry and other natural sciences that each Ninja must undergo. In addition to Herbology and Western Medicine, the Ninja are taught Anatomy, Biology, Physics, Metallurgy and Meteorology.

Physics is taught with an emphasis on cause and effect

or action and reaction on a physical as well as philosophical level.

Anatomy was an interest of the Ninja, long before Westerners saw it as a valuable course of study. Children are taught anatomy, in part, at age thirteen as they are made responsible for burying all the dead. They must wash and prepare the bodies and thereby, also learn a healthy

respect for life itself. It is believed, in addition, that dealing with death in this way will eliminate the tendency toward a "macho" attitude, as the young people will see, first hand, the ultimate vulnerability of even their most respected heroes.

In the study of Chemistry, the Ninja learns to prepare a variety of concoctions including gun powder and other aspects of pyrotechnics.

In Biology a student learns about plants as well as animals. He learns how to grow things and how to live off of the land. He learns what plants are good for food, which are good for medicine and which are poisonous. Toxicology, in fact, is an important study topic in itself, and much time is devoted to it in Ninja training.

In addition to the Natural Sciences, Ninja learn the laws and principles of Mathematics, Engineering, Economics, Political Science, Business and Management, International Relations and Speech.

Math is taught to the Ninja to the degree that one can make those calculations necessary to utilize statistics, estimate time/distance and attrition rates, to name but three. These abilities played a much stronger role in the past, as Ninja were able to predict where and when an enemy would emerge (knowing distance and speed of travel) and lie in wait, rather than follow. They could also tell how long an enemy could last, on food and ammunition rations, and merely wait until the time to strike was advantageous.

Engineering was a separate study, which was taught to

Ninja (along with Metallurgy to a large degree) to help them prepare everything from weapons, to shelters to bridges to fortresses. Without any manufactured goods to work with, Ninja often were able to fortify entire villages with the raw materials on hand.

Economics became an important aspect of Ninja training when important pacts were made between traders and Ninja leaders. It also became painfully obvious in time that rice (or money) was an exchange of power in Japan. The more rice (or money) that one had, the more resources that were made available to that power.

The more that Japan's culture turned toward a Rice and Trade Economy, the more important Business and Management strategies became to the Ninja. Beyond the understanding of ways and means to manipulate the economy to one's advantage, Management techniques were taught as another aspect of Leadership. A Ninja, in short, had to know how to set up an entire economic structure.

The study of Political Science is a natural outcropping of an understanding of economics. Within this study, Ninja learn the importance of careful scrutiny of Current Events and History. The object, of course is to not repeat mistakes that have already been made. This entails a very detailed look at history, with all variables considered.

Understanding International Relations is a course of examination that results from the Ninja's origins and their extensive work with traders. To facilitate their

effectiveness in international affairs Ninja created their own language, which was a combination of all the languages learned through trade. This is a spoken language only, not written. Often it was used under the pretext that the speaker was babbling inanities. Only other nearby Ninja would understand fully what was being said.

However, these same Ninja could transform themselves into the most perfect speakers at will, as they deemed it necessary. For, the ability to effectively communicate is one that is formally and stridently pursued.

Physical Training

As we've already discussed, when talking about any one aspect of Ninjitsu, because of the total eclectic quality, a compendium of elements must necessarily be considered. This is also the case with the subject of physical training. The problem of analysis becomes even more complex in this area, due to the great body of physical training techniques used to teach the principles of Ninjitsu. There are in short, as many techniques as there are creative thoughts. The following is merely a representative sampling of the most common techniques and methods that

were and are now utilized in the instruction of the martial science of the Koga Ninja.

Basically, each Koga Ninja student's training began at an early age. The course of study took into consideration every principle and concept that has already been discussed. However, during the young Ninja's training, these concepts were dealt with in a manner that was geared toward the age and attention span of youth. Later, the same techniques were modified for the matured, analytical mind of the Ninja adult.

One of the most important things that a Ninja initiate must learn is the Vital Points on the body's anatomy. This includes an understanding of the workings and directional route of every nerve in the system. The Ninja also had to know pressure points and the workings and function of all joints and bones. The object of this training was to enable the Ninja to destroy an opponent with a single blow rather than wasting energy on "punching it out" during battle. For this reason, Koga Ninja have gained the reputation of being savage. While another fighter might jab a fist to his opponents face, the Koga Ninja will drive a finger through the eye. The eye is obviously the most vital spot on the face. The Koga Ninja philosophy would ask: why strike anything else?

Learning how the body works, to the point of being able to break it down and reconstruct it, served another important function in Ninja training. Often, Ninja were called upon as healers, either for their own people

or by others who knew of their special abilities.

One special technique that was utilized by the Koga Ninja was learned from Mongolian warriors. This was a massage technique called "Chua Ka" which applied acupressure and acupuncture knowledge. Chua Ka was used by warriors to numb the body before battle. Ninja would massage one another and make the body insensitive to pain, while allowing it to remain mobile. It was because of Chua Ka that Ninja warriors would be cut or struck and continue fighting as if they were uninjured. The fact was that they just didn't feel the pain. Their reaction to injury often caused fear (and ultimately defeat) in an otherwise overwhelming opponent who saw the Ninja as superhuman, because they would not give up (or even flinch) even when they had lost a hand or an arm.

The Ninja understood this kind of cause and effect. That is what sets their training apart from other martial "arts." In an art one combines elements and creates new results. They do not KNOW what the results of their actions will be. A Ninja, on the other hand, knows that his theories of movements, his understanding of human psychology and his strategies will produce specific results. It is for this reason that Koga Ninja view their teachings not as a martial art but a MARTIAL SCIENCE.

A Ninja's physical training is often viewed as much more intense than other martial arts. The Ninja not only has to know how and be able to perform certain movements, but what his opponents reactions to those movements will be. In

other words he has to be able to think and react several moves in advance. For example, a Ninja pre-trains himself to work an attack at certain angles. He does this because, by working these angles, he limits the possible responses of his opponent. From the first blow, he takes into account not only the beginning moves then, but the ending ones, as well as the repercussions of his actions. This is another reason why Ninja disguise their actions. They knew that a battle seldom ended with the defeat of one man or another. Relatives and friends often would try to revenge a loved-ones death. An evenly fought battle, for this reason, was often made to look like robbery, to get the Ninja off the hook in the future.

These concepts and actual fighting abilities are stimulated at childhood. The first thing a child is taught is how to recognize stimulus and to use their hands. This talent is strengthened with the use of tiny flags of brightly colored cloth. These are waved in front of the infant or toddler and when grabbed the child is rewarded with positive reinforcement, a hug or kiss. The child learns to move naturally, using abilities that are innate, on a constant reward basis. If a child is slow or lazy, he is snubbed or ignored, but never struck. There are two good reasons for this. One is, it is believed, that positive affection is the best stimulator of learning. The other reason for a restriction of physical reprimands, deals with the fact that one strike could easily turn into a dangerous battle between parents, children and siblings. A bloody

fight would not be the goal, but the training is so intense that a young Ninja might react in his own defense without thinking. This reaction would inevitably, and immediately, escalate to the point of serious injury since Ninja don't pull punches.

Many of the physical training techniques have the aura of the bizarre in the untrained eye, because of this realistic quality.

When a Ninja is older, for example, he is taught to hang for long periods (up to several hours) not because it is fun, but because someday his life may depend on it.

In addition, Koga-Ninja are given small amounts of a certain poison in their food, from birth. Eventually, the Koga children become immune to the effects of the poison, but another person (one who the Ninja might want to assassinate, or is posing as a friendly Ninja) would fall prey to the deadly substance. This is, in fact, one of the tests of Koga-Ninja authenticity. Iga-Ninja (an opposing faction) knew about poisons but did not use them in this way. If there was any question about a Ninja's authentic origins, one simply had to feed him. The dead ones were not of Koga lineage.

After basic reaction skills have been sufficiently fortified in a Ninja child, he learns actual fighting application. There is specific instruction in the usual areas such as falling, striking, stances, kicks etc. However, unlike the dojo trained martial artist, the Ninja receives instruction in every conceivable environment. Techniques are modified to meet the special demands of any situation. Fighting is taught in trees, on snow, on sand, in hallways, on ice and onboard ship where the deck is pitching, to name but a few examples.

Again, these techniques are taught from early age, but are made into games, at first, to allow the young Ninja an opportunity to practice without having to think that he's practicing. For instance, hide and seek is a game played by all children. Ninja children learn the game and play it with an unusual fervor, sometimes lying quietly, without any movement, in a thornbush for hours if the "seeker" is unable to locate him. This game is also taught with a special emphasis on "seeking" or tracking skills which allows play to go far beyond our western concept of it.

All actual fighting techniques, even when first introduced to the children, take on this special quality of realism in multi-environments. For instance, when learning basic stances, the Ninja child not only learns to perform these movements on flat ground, but learns them to the point that he's able to do them on a tightrope. To achieve this kind of perfection, the child first attempts these stances on a board that is raised only a few inches from

the ground. The board, progressively is exchanged for a thinner one and raised higher off the ground. The end product of this progression is the tight-rope, several feet above the earth.

Another example of how this type of realism is sneaked into a young Ninja's training comes with a technique of teaching breaking. Breaking of boards or other objects has long been held a viable martial arts method to test concentration, speed and power. Ninja also use breaking for this purpose. Often, however, Ninja children (and adults) are given the opportunity to break actual bone as opposed to simulation materials. This is done in two ways. Either an animal carcass, or skeleton-part (such as a skull) was used, or, when enemies were killed the bodies were sometimes brought in and given to the children to practice on. This second method offered a two-fold learning opportunity. First, of course, the child learned what actual human bone and muscle felt like to strike. Second, children were made continually aware of human frailty and the presence of death.

Realism was not only instructed in terms of how one deals out punishment. Every Ninja knows what it is to take a beating. A Ninja family group fight, was a once-a-week affair for each individual. And, the philosophy was typically hard-core. In other words, it was understood that you would fight as you trained, so it made sense only to train hard.

In a family unit or school, a kumite (fighting) stage

is carried out into an open area, every night. One member of the group takes his turn as un-protected fighter, while the other members don light-weight armor. This armor allows (and actually forces) the student to fight back with all his might. There are NO pulled punches. If he does not defeat his opponents, then they are at liberty to strike him, for real. If he fails to protect himself, he is dealt a severe blow. There is no room for laxity.

It should be emphasized that women were expected to take part in these kumite matches on an equal and regular basis.

Another form of fighting that was dealt with in a realistic fashion was horse-combat. This entailed learning techniques, not only for riding horses, but actually taking them down and killing them with bare hands. Naturally, this knowledge became less and less valuable as horseback fighting lost strategic importance.

After a child is fairly well schooled in hand-to-hand basics he is given his first sword. The sword had practical as well as symbolic importance at all levels of Japanese society. The Ninja child is first given a small but real blade and taught to mimick his father, older brothers, or other elders who are foremost examples in his training. The child is also taught to make his own weapons, even to the point that he is forging right alongside his father.

Ninja actually learn the practical use of over three-hundred different weapons, but they tend to

specialize in only two or three. The most popular traditional weapon of the Koga-Ninja was the "Kyotseo Shogei," often used in pairs. Contrary to the Iga version of the weapon, the Koga's is larger and makes use of a grappling-hook versus the Iga who make use of an iron ring attached by rope to the Shogei. The Koga Ninja's Kyotseo Shogei can be utilized in the manner of a sword, or can be thrown. They are specifically balanced so that they always stick, and were commonly dipped in the same poison which coated Shuriken (throwing darts) and Shaken (throwing stars).

The second most popular weapon was the sword, for obvious reasons. To the class-conscious Ninja it seemed perfectly delightful to defeat the Samurai with their own status symbol.

Archery was the third most studied of the traditional weapons. The Ninja preferred a small bow, or a crossbow above the long bows of the Samurai.

Today, following the 16th century innovation of firearms, these have become the weapons of preference with the traditionals learned as backups. All Ninja, however are taught to improvise as their first means of defense. They learned the value of using the "natural weapons" (thorn-bushes, rocks, cliffs, tree-branches) as well as manufactured items that were not commonly held as weapons (chairs, tables, pot-lids and farm tools). Farm tools became especially popular on Okinawa as weapons, when prohibitions against peasants owning conventional weapons

went into effect.

Today, Ninja learn to use credit cards, straws and hairbrushes, (to name but three), and can become extremely deadly with any of these. They know that any object, in trained and skilled hands, becomes just as deadly as the surgeon's knife.

In addition to target shooting, Ninja also are taught specific sniping, hunting, and combat techniques and variations for each. They also learn to throw any kind of object and make it stick, from the acient and traditional "chopsticks" to the more modern and utilitarian tire-iron. Sparring (kumite) took place, at all times, with all of these weapons, as well as weaponless.

Two nights (today, Friday and Saturday seem to be prefered) were set aside for mediatation (a time to consolidate and internalize all that had been learned) and for acting out scenarios. Ninja groups were given specific emergency, life-threatening situations, as if they were real, and practiced their individual role as part of the whole plan of action. Each plan (or counter measure) was given a short code name or word. The group was expected to rush into proper action at the mention of the specific code word. The thinking behind this training stemmed from the numerous attacks that the families often had to endure. If a home was being raided, instead of becoming the intended victims, the designated Ninja leader would merely call out one of the prearranged counter-measures and everyone in the house would move, united against their attackers. This

often would turn the tables, catching the attackers off guard, transforming the attackers into victims.

Children were taught the value of co-ordinated effort by first learning individual co-ordination. First, the child was given a shell and instructed to bounce the shell off a wall,

alternating hands, without catching it or letting the shell fall. This action is kept up for hours on end. In this way the child learns coordination as well as patience and concentration.

Endurance is taught to Ninja through the two most common methods of running and swimming. Both of these can be performed by adept Ninja practitioners over long distances, and training in these areas follows the usual patterns.

Ninja are credited with the ability to cover on foot up to 100 miles in a single day. This seems incredible until we examine other peoples, notably certain Native American tribes, who have been documented to daily travel upwards of 70 to 80 miles. There is a story of an elderly, modern-day-Ninja, trained in the traditional methods, who specialized in running messages from one town to the next during the War. He was visiting with younger members of Ninja relatives who were preparing to run in a marathon race. The younger Ninja asked the Older one (now nearing eighty) if he still ran. He responded that he was getting older and did not run the same as he used to. The younger Ninja, spawned to curiosity by ancient tales, further queried the old man as to exactly how far he could run. The Old Ninja responded that, since he had turned seventy-five he had slowed down quite a bit. He said that he could "run today, tomorrow and part of the next day, but that's all."

Children are taught to swim when they are still infants. This is particularly noteworthy, since the ability

to swim was a rare one in early Japan. Ninja are also taught to hold their breath for long periods of time. This ability proved very valuable when pretending to be drowned, which was easy to convince a non-swimming pursuer of, since it was commonly believed that anyone who went into the water over their head would probably die.

Ninja, in fact, are taught to be totally comfortable in and around water in a number of ways. Most climbing is also taught over water, as at a cliff near a waterfall. The reasoning here was that the climber could more easily lose a fear of heights if he knew a mistake would only result in getting wet. Jumping into water, was a secondary skill learned by this method of teaching the art of climbing.

Jumping from heights of up to ninety feet into water, were common for Ninja. Ninja also learned to jump from heights onto land, as well as from great heights while tied to a rope. This final skill proved essential in escapes from fortresses. Ninja would not want to take the time for a slow climb down a high wall with guardsmen shooting down after them. They would, therefore, tie one end of a rope to the top of the wall, the other to themselves and jump. This feat required a special knowledge of the distance to the ground from the walls' top. Tying oneself on too long a rope resulted in death.

This skill of jumping while tied to a higher object was also utilized in combat against horsemen. The Ninja could hide in trees and jump down onto an oncoming rider, knocking him from his horse. The loose horse added to the

chaos on the ground, while the Ninja climbed the rope, back into the trees.

In addition to the above mentioned water-skills, Ninja are also schooled in such varied areas as building canoes and scuba. Ancient Ninja used snorkels to hide underwater, and their canoes were often flipped-over to supply camouflage for long distance swimming. The Ninja could hide under the flipped canoe and float to a safe destination, while those on shore saw only a floating log.

Ninja training, at it's summit, includes every form of body-building and conditioning to some degree. To name them all would necessitate several volumes, and would always be non-conclusive. There are a number of special skills, however that still deserve mention.

These skills include First Aid (so that each Ninja could take care of another) which consisted of Herbology, Acupressure and Acupuncture; Tracking (so that Ninja could not only track by day or night but could easily cover his own tracks); Pyrotechnics/Demolition (often using bamboo filled with gun-powder, metal nails or glass fragments) where boobytraps, bombs and mines could be used to protect or attack; and Seduction.

Seduction, in fact, was taught almost as a separate skill, so complicated is the human sex drive. Sex education was taught to children at a very young age. It is stressed that "love" is the greatest shifting of power. A state of mind in which one can be easily manipulated (i.e. jealousy) and thereby one of the most devastating methods to destroy

an adversary.

Because of the Ninja's special attitude about sex, one of the greatest Koga Ninja warriors of all time was a woman. She was capable of getting to those whom, because of position and power, were believed untouchable. It is suggested that her name became the foundation of the small town of Enryakuji in Japan. She is reported to have killed over three hundred men by driving a poisoned needle into the backs of their necks during the throes of passion. She even convinced separate lovers on several occasions that she had been raped by a leading daimyo or perhaps her lovers best friend and intended target. Consequently, Enryakuji manipulated her lovers to do her dirty work for her (by dueling).

This "Kunoichi" (female Ninja) was also renowned for her abilities in combat and was reported to have, armed only with a Shogeji, killed five Samurai on horseback in a single battle. From the Koga's Erazan group, this Kunoichi eventually ended up as the first woman to head a Ninja group/clan.

In connection with Enryakuji's fabled feats, Assassination was thought of as a Special Skill. The reason that Assassination took on such importance is summed up in the Ninja saying "to kill the snake you must crush the head." This catch phrase refers to the Samurai's unusual trait to, after their leader had been assassinated, commit suicide (in order to protect their Lord when he enters the other world). Thus the Ninja saw the death of one man led

to the demise of many.

Eventually, because of the obvious value of the art, the Ninja perfected the art of the totally undetectable kill, the legendary "Death Touch." This technique applied "Chua Ka" principles (mongolian acupressure/massage) and allowed someone to be struck with little force, leaving no marks or bruises, yet caused extreme internal damage which resulted in death. The symptoms would never appear until hours, even days later. Today, this skill is demonstrated by modern day Ninja who can, after stacking bricks and tiles of different densities, strike the pile with little force and shatter the bottom brick, leaving the remaining bricks and delicate tiles (like the body) intact.

Other skills in the "Special" catagory included those that were thought of as Survival Skills. Any skill, in fact, could become a survival skill at any time. The understanding of this principle made Survival the key element in Ninja morality, transcending almost all other principles. Amongst this special catagory Ninja mastered breaking/entering, (all facets including lockpicking). One also learned to perfect the ability to fight while completely shackled, (utilizing any free part of the body). Ninja also had to possess the ability to conquer the elements and exist totally independant of others. They had to be able to live off the land, needing nothing save for their skill to survive in any environment, (including desert, since the Gobi in China was sometimes their battleground). Ninja were often called upon to fight and

gather information in distant foreign lands, therefore they had to be skilled in the science of navigation, (land and sea), without the aid of maps.

Ninja prepared themselves for any eventuality, such as capture. "Inpo", (escape and evasion) is just one example of the Ninja's scope of preparedness. "Inpo" taught Ninja how to dislocate their joints in order to slip out of shackles or ropes, not unlike the world's most renowned escape artist, the great Houdini. Joint dislocation enabled the Ninja to hide in otherwise impossible spaces. By so doing they were often smuggled from a dangerous spot by the aid of foreign traders who they befriended, or totally unsuspecting souls paid to transport a small but heavy box or vase.

Often applied in escape and attack situations, Diversion is another discipline the Ninja must master. Ninja learned the value of mimicking not only the sounds of animals but the voices of powerful enemies. To confuse and misdirect the Samurai, Ninja would call out orders in the voices of Samurai leaders. The animal sounds were used as a form of communication when spoken words and sign language was impossible.

Escape and Raiding, (a separate study) spawned other disciplines such as parachuting and hang-gliding, disguise, camouflage, slight of hand, misdirection, magic tricks, props, special effects and masks, to name but a few.

The use of Masks was especially favored by the Koga clans of Ninjitsu. While the Ninja already possessed a psychological advantage over their enemies, hiding their faces behind hoods, the Koga would further unsettle their opponents by wearing horrifying masks under the hood. This tactic served so well that Ninja were earnestly believed to be demons. The Koga's Bisen group reinforced the Samurai's superstition by being the first Ninja to blow smoke, powder, fire and poison tipped needles from tubes hidden behind the mouth holes of their masks. The Bisen were infamous for ripping off their hoods, exposing their masks in order to momentarily stun and paralyze their enemies with fear, before attempting to strike them down.

The culmination of all this training is tested in as severe a manner as might be expected. There are really no blackbelts in Ninjitsu. Rather, rank is given upon acceptance into the clan. Acceptance is earned, after years of training, when the student can put all of one's knowledge to one final test...and pass.

HISTORY (SHI)

Throughout the annals of Japan's colorful history, no single breed of humans wrecked more havoc or spawned more terror than the Ninja.

Cloaked in black from head to toe, the mere mention of the name "Ninja," in Japan, conjured up images of superhumans who could, with occult powers fly like birds or transform themselves into smoke to escape from enemies.

In the western world, the Ninja is portrayed, through film, television or in print, in the highly fictionalized role of assassin, spy or elite member of an evil, underground cult.

While there is some basis to the many exaggerations surrounding the image of the Ninja, the truth is they were nothing more than a people, forced by historical necessity to become the warrior wizards of Japan. For instance, when it became apparent that the use of an air attack would serve beneficial, the Ninja DID fly, but with the use of

giant kites that were not unlike modern-day hang-gliders. Brilliant yes, but not magical.

To begin to understand how the secret art of the Ninja was allowed to flourish "one must look to the roots of the tree to find its strength."

To find the origins of Ninjitsu we see that these roots lay in the teachings of the ancient Chinese strategist, Sun Tzu who lived sometime between 500 and 300 B.C. However, it wasn't until the 6th century A.D. when these principles and ideas were cultivated in their entirety, utilized to their fullest potential as written in Sun Tzu's "Book of War," the "Ping Fa."

The person most responsible for implementing the "Ping Fa" was Prince Regent Shotoku (593-622 A.D.). He introduced the principles of "Ping Fa" to Japan as a means of settling civil strife. Adherence to these principles helped provide him with intelligence information and offered him personal security (both valuable commodities for political figures, then and now).

Trusting no one in his own country, Prince Regent Shotoku insured absolute loyalty by recruiting exceptional men and women--warriors, slaves, monks, craftsmen, etc.--from throughout the eastern world. This provided that everyone who interacted with him, was solely dependent upon him for their existence in Japan. He then spared no expense for their training and development. In essence, Shotoku created a secret, nameless warrior class that was free of the confines of the Bushido Code (the samurai code of

chivalry).

From the kingdom of Silla, (Southeast Korea), Shotoku enlisted to his cause Chinese warriors and Buddhist monks. He could do this because an earlier alliance had been formed between Silla and China in the time of Emperor Sui, (589 A.D.).

By enlisting new ideas into the strictly forged concepts of Japanese methodology, enlightenment was spawned. From the Chinese warriors, for instance, knowledge of gun-powder, archery and circular movement was contributed. The latter fascinated Shotoku.

Because the Bushido Code calls for a devotee to "follow one path," all advances in traditional Japanese martial arts are based on linear movements. All defenses and blocks, in turn, are also based on being attacked in a straight-line fashion.

Shotoku understood that by introducing circular and angular movements, the linear fundamentals would not hold true. Thus he circumvented traditional strategies and tactics. Ninjitsu, based on these "new" principles, is therefore given a decisive advantage over strict, traditional Japanese styles.

In exchange for religious freedoms, the Chinese monks, some Toaist and some Buddhist, contributed their knowledge of herbology, philosophy, logic, analytic thought and the animal system. This system is best remembered (and whose strikes, i.e. crane, tiger, bear) is still practiced by Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu descendants

Another contribution survives with the use of the Taoist "I Ching." These principles of strategy and tactics are based on the five elements of "Chi" (earth), "Sui" (Water), "Ka" (fire), "Fu" (wind) and "Ku" (void). The Ninja applied these concepts to the corresponding body movement whereas the Earth, translated into stances, feet firmly planted in place, immovable; Water, applied to techniques such as angling away from an attack; Fire, relates to jamming an attack by moving forward; Wind, corresponds to maneuvers such as circular blocks, tumbling, sidestepping and slipping evasions; And, Void, was taught in conjunction to hiding or actions through psychological means.

Through his Chinese mercenaries, Shotoku learned first hand of the great battles and defeats of the Emperor Sui, who mounted a massive invasion (over a million warriors) against the Koguryo Kingdom, (North Korea, about 589 A.D.). The characteristics of these warriors were spartan-like, ambitious, fond of war and raiding, extremely violent and courageous.

Shotoku risked the loss of his Silla ties and undertook the recruitment and smuggling of these infamous Koguryo warriors through Silla to Japan. Koguryo and Silla were at war at the time. Shotoku's desires prevailing, the Koguryo warriors took their place in his ranks. They were especially favored by Shotoku since they had inflicted such severe defeats on Silla's allies, the Chinese, they had caused the Sui Dynasty to fall...marking the beginning of

the T'ang Dynasty (618-904 A.D.).

With Shotoku's success in obtaining these warriors and adding them to his human arsenal, the Koguryo uniquely influenced the foundations of Ninjitsu. The Koguryo contributed to this newly formed warrior society their spartan-like ideals--training should begin at childhood, use of guerilla tactics (hit and run), and a violent, close weaponless combat style based on bone breaking and eye gouging.

When the Koguryo warriors joined Shotoku's forces, Mongols also arrived. These men contributed their unmatched abilities as horsemen, silent walking arts, and a massage technique called "Chua Ka." "Chua Ka" is a combination of acupuncture and acupressure manipulations, from which the famous "Ninja Death Touch" is derived.

Ancient Ninja legends, handed down from generation to generation, proclaim that Shotoku's search for "the finest ever to be gathered" caused him to send agents as far as India, the Middle East and perhaps even parts of Europe.

Evidence of this final belief is related in the legend of the Ninja named Kobiashi, who was said to have possessed blue eyes and a six foot, three inch stature (possibly due to arian ancestry).

According to legend, Kobiashi became the first "Yamabushi" or "mountain warrior." He single-handedly defeated eighty Samurai in one day. During this same battle, the lives of two other Samurai were spared by Kobiashi so that they could return to their comrades and

relate the event. The thinking was that these two could serve as an eyewitness warning to others never to return and oppose Kobiashi, otherwise he would come down from the mountain and slay all Samurai at will.

The possible factuality of this legend is compounded by the fact that the "Yamabushi" people of the Koga region in Japan do not share the traditional Japanese feature of an oval, flat face. Their features include high cheek-bones and strong jaw lines. Some of these people possess traits that are definitely foreign to Japan. For example, many of them are unable to grow facial hair, something that is true only amongst descendants of Indian or Nomadic Mongol tribes.

II

After the death of Prince Regent Shotoku, the Japanese became embroiled in a bitter power struggle between Buddhist and Shintoist factions. Both were concerned over which of their doctrines would be designated as the official state religion.

During this controversy, the secret warrior class that was created by Shotoku fled to the Koga mountains to wait and to watch. They were concerned over the social climate and believed that once the struggle involved influential court nobels, war would break out and they might be made into scapegoats.

In the mountains the Shotoku warrior class intermarried with villagers and established ties with the mountains' Japanese inhabitants. The inhabitants, mostly Buddhists, eagerly accepted the tutelage. Later, after repelling enormously overwhelming numbers of bandits, the people earned the title of "Yamabushi" (mountain warriors) which was bestowed upon them by the low-land, Shinto nobles.

At this time, the elite warrior class of Shotoku numbered fifty families. Here is when the Yamabushi named En-no-Gyoja appeared on the scene and tried to restore order with "Shugendo," a new way of propagating Buddhism.

As En-no-Gyoja's campaign gained increasing support from the people, the aristocracy forced a showdown with En-no-Gyoja and his followers.

Motivated by fears that the Yamabushi were gaining ruling power, the nobles sent large government forces to subdue them. The Yamabushi, having little knowledge of military tactics called upon the fifty families to lead them in battle. The odds were great. But, the fifty families agreed to lead the Yamabushi, cementing their status as Yamabushi themselves and not outsiders.

This move enabled the fifty families to win absolute support of the people of the mountain, which made it possible for them to live in secrecy and establish the Ninja network throughout all of Japan. This also marked the first time that Sun Tzu's tactics were put to the test on a collective, as well as an individual basis.

The Shinto aristocrats were unable to conquer the highlands. Buddhist priests began to take refuge in the villages of the Yamabushi, away from the Shinto aristocracy that was calling for the Shinto purification of Japan. This policy, in short, amounted to nothing more than genocide for all unbelievers--Shinto now being accepted as the "only wayd." It also marked the beginning of the class struggle which would produce and support the Ninja.

Confident that Buddhists were no longer a threat to them, the nobles turned their attentions to each other and became involved in a bitter, internal dispute. This gave the Yamabushi even more time to cultivate their art.

By the Heian period (794-1185) the ancient science of "Omyodo"--which includes astronomy, astrology, the Chinese art of divination and logic--became an integral part of Ninjitsu. This martial science, during the Heian period took a firm root and assumed the basic form it was to follow over the next four centuries.

During this turbulent era, the Genji clan ruled Japan, overshadowed by its rival the Heike clan. Both courted the Yamabushi to join their ranks, their skills in battle now becoming legendary. The Yamabushi became troubled, fearing now that they would be forced to choose sides in a struggle that really did not concern them. On the other hand, if they did not choose, they might be forced to face each clan's wrath. What the Yamabushi decided, characteristically in keeping with Ninja-like philosophy, was to teach both sides. To this end they established the Mount Kurama, Hachi-ryu school.

The school was opened at the base of Mt. Kurama by the Koga-Yamabushi family Hachi. Both Heike and Genji warriors studied various martial arts there--Kenjitsu (sword combat), Juijitsu (unarmed combat), Kyujitsu (archery), Bojitsu (staff fighting), Yarijitsu (spear combat), Iaijitsu (fast-draw swordsmanship) to name but a few.

The Genji and Heike learned, at times, under the same master. So, to avoid confrontations that might result in duels, all students were instructed to enter the school naked, save for a loin-cloth. Once inside, the student was pampered, bathed and then dressed in the school colors of

grey and black.

The Hachi-ryu became especially favored and embraced by the Samurai, because it was incredibly systematized, stylized and refined to the point that it was considered cultural exercises. This was exactly the intention of the Yamabushi. They could make peace with both sides while keeping their own pragmatic style for themselves along with all the counters and secret knowledge of the weaknesses that existed in the style they were now teaching. Thus, the Yamabushi (Ninja forerunners) increased their individual and collective tactics and strategies by leaps and bounds, and kept well advanced over the leading Samurai who would return to their respective daimyos (feudal lords) and take the position as master instructor for the other troops.

By the end of the Heian period in 1185, the central government in Kyoto had become so weak that the Yamabushi of Mt. Kurama (just north of the capitol) began to operate--resisting and forcing the collapse of various daimyos.

It is important to remember that, at this time the Samurai (to serve, or more precisely to 'be' served like a king) were extremely brutal. They practiced their Bushido code to the very letter. The concept of the "one path" was translated by them to the extreme that left-handed children (opposite the norm for the One Path) were forceably taken from their parents and then disembowelled in the local, public square.

The Yamabushi, clad from head to toe in black, hooded to conceal their identity, would rescue these children and take them to the mountains to be raised as their own. It is for this reason that the Ninja trains to be ambidextrous. It was also due to these rescues that the Ninja were considered gangsters or scum--because they were acting in blatant opposition to the Bushido Code as it was represented by the norms of the Japanese ruling class. These warriors additionally became a symbol of class resistance to the aristocracy, threatening the caste system as a whole.

During this time the peasants only reason for living, according to the Samurai, was to serve the Samurai. It was not uncommon for a Samurai to decapitate a peasant, without warning, merely to try out a new blade. The Yamabushi, clad again in blue/black to assist them in blending into the darkness, would appear and disappear against these cruel Samurai, leaving such Samurai and their offensive "new blade" face down in the dust. Thusly, the common people named these mystery men "NINJA"--'Nin' meaning simultaneously 'to hide within; spirit; skill; the cutting-edge of a blade.' 'Ja' is a term of assignation. Therefore, to be Ninja means someone "whose spirit and skill are as sharp as the edge of a blade."

While the Samurai continued to wander during the daytime, ignoring the changing social climate and needs of the people, the Yamabushi Ninja or Mt. Kurama were becoming so proficient in their art that three of them literally ruled the capitol of Kyoto at night. Like Robin Hood, these Ninja would steal back from the Samurai what the Samurai plundered and stole from the peasants and surrounding townships. Some of the things that the Samurai were fond of taking included the wives and daughters of the peasant farmers. These women were usually conscripted into the ranks of a Samurai's concubine. Later, women were to take an equal place in Ninjitsu training and would become formidable adversaries themselves, putting a damper on many a Samurai's amorous intentions.

III

The first and oldest established school of Ninjitsu was founded by the Koga-Yamabushi, Genji war hero, Yoshitsune. The Yoshitsune-ryu school stressed jumping and the strategy for carrying out the surprise attack. This strategy, has been embraced by a number of militarists even to this day, including the Japanese who utilized it to defeat the Chinese in 1895, the Russians at Port Arthur in 1904 and the Americans at Pearl Harbor in 1941.

Yoshitsune himself became distinguished by introducing the hit-and-run tactic of his Koguryo ancestors when he used it against the Ainu and other rebels along the Japanese frontier. In a similar fashion the U.S. calvary was dispatched to quell unrest among the American Indians.

According to Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu history, Yoshitsune made all of his students swear to abandon and/or resist the Bushido Code. They were told that the code was a falsehood, made to trap and keep one a prisoner of the caste system. At the core of this falsehood was the belief that life was a game, death its only end and reward. In death, therefore, the grander and higher reward of life is achieved. Thus, even in suicide there is honor.

Philosophically, Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu emphasizes respect for all forms of life; and to more fully understand and realize life, the Ninja studies "death"--in direct contrast to the Samurai to whom the rules were all important and "life" was only a game to be played. The goal of the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja, by "Western" morality, is directed to enhancing inner worth and solidifying the notion that "life" has value.

Only by living can one contribute to his own kind. With these beliefs, the Samurai idea of honor and confronting your enemy on equal terms on the battlefield, was easily dismissed.

Another contribution by Yoshitsune was the formal introduction of Shurikenjitsu, (blade/star throwing), as an independent study. He also combined the art of throwing with toxicology (study of poisons). These two disciplines, combined, allowed the Ninja's blades to gain a reputation as something to be feared. For, all they had to do was break the surface of the skin of an opponent in order to deal a fatal blow. This made it possible for a Ninja to handle multiple attackers, sometimes upwards of twenty, with very little difficulty. This tactic, along with the use of blowguns and climbing techniques were borrowed from Yoshitsune's long past enemies, the Ainu.

It is because of Yoshitsune's teachings of synthesizing every pragmatic form of combat (taking only the deadliest, most effective techniques and disregarding the ritual) that Ninjitsu can be defined as an eclectic

martial science--always changing with time and technology, always improving to the point that it remains a system of total self-defense. Unlike the Samurai's view of life as a "game to be played," Ninja viewed their art on the much grander scale of "man vs. man; man vs. the elements." Their art was and is unequalled in its scope, efficiency and ferocity.

Translating Ninjitsu in a more figurative sense then, it means "the battlefield skill of hiding within" or "the art of invisibility, stealth." Some Ninja philosophers believe that the art received its name from a letter that was carried between two daimyos. In this communication one daimyo warned, "beware of demon-men who looked for cannot be found, listened for cannot be heard, reached for cannot be touched. Those who slip in and out of the black of night at will for they have mastered the art of stealth (ninjitsu)."

The beginning of the Golden Age of Ninjitsu coincides with the entrance into the Kamakura Period (1192-1333 A.D.). As described by Andrew Adams in his book "Ninja, The Invisible Assassins" this age would spread over four centuries, making the Ninja, literally legends in their own time.

By 1192, over twenty-five schools of Ninjitsu had sprung up. This was merely due to the fact that the original fifty Yamabushi-Ninja families had grown and spread themselves throughout all of Japan. Each school produced a group of warriors that was loyal to any one

family. The ten most powerful of these groups were the: (1) Koga, (2) Iga, (3) Bisen, (4) Erazen, (5) Haguro, (6) Nakagana, (7) Uesugi, (8) Masuda, (9) Kuroda, and (10) Fukushima. The number of Ninja groups and sub-groups exceeded several hundred (the Natori, Hatano, Yagyu to name but a few Koga sub-groups).

By the late 12th century an ideological schism occurred within the Ninja ranks that would haunt Ninja practitioners for centuries to come. Out of this schism ALL Ninja would be seen in a dark light, much contrary to the traditional folk-heros they had become. The event that caused the change is attributed to the Iga clan.

In 1192, dominated by three Ninja families--the Oe, Hattori and Momochi clans--forty-nine Ninja sub-groups broke away from the original fifty Yamabushi-Ninja families. These three families and their respective sub-groups established the Iga clan, jointly ruling Iga Province (Mei prefecture). In Koga Province to the north, (Shiga prefecture), more than fifty Ninja family groups and seventeen-hundred sub-groups provided the foundation for the Koga-ryu of Ninjitsu. So named after the most powerful of the fifty family groups, the Koga with over two hundred sub-groups under it's direct control.

The Iga clan soon found themselves alone, boxed in on all sides by the Koga and the rest of the Ninja clans. These other groups were spread out all over Japan. The Iga, meanwhile, were laying plans to establish the Hakuho (White Pheonix) castle of Iga Ueno. There, the families regrouped, recruited and retrained "Ronin" (unemployed, masterless Samurai). They also adopted any other cut-throat who was willing to swear total allegiance to the Oe, Hattori or Momochi clans. The Iga then sold their abilities to the highest bidder.

It is for this reason that Iga Province is thought of as the cradle of Ninjitsu, for in Iga a diamyo could easily find and hire Ninja to fulfill the most needed of five

functions: spying, gathering information, carrying secret messages, infiltrating the enemy headquarters to cause confusion before or during a battle, or assassination.

Somewhat resembling the American Civil War, Japan was divided by northern and southern dynasties. From this time onward, Iga and Koga-Yamabushi Ninja became sworn enemies.

The Koga aligned themselves to the north, the Iga to the south. The north finally subdued the south in 1392 and both the north and south were unified...except for the Koga and Iga clans.

Seventy-five years into the Muromachi Era (1390-1600), and Japan would become, again, a nation of rebellion and wars. The country was literally ripped apart by one struggle after another. The nation was broken up into small lands, each with a daimyo (warlord), each trying to expand his boundaries. This brought about a collapse of any kind of law and order. Robbery, rape and murder became ordinary events that were almost acceptable as part of day-to-day life. The absence of morals created a situation where only the strong could survive. -

In the midst of this chaos, the Ninja came into his own. The clan loyalties sustained and protected its members from harm through unity and common purpose. In places like Masuda, Samurai or ronin never ventured within fifty miles. They knew that if they did, they would never be seen again. The common people, many of them Ninja families, flourished with trade and in peace while the rest of Japan became an example of man's inhumanity against man.

The loyalties of various Ninja clans became vital to the many warlords. These daimyos needed to know the strength of their many enemies, their weaknesses and plans for expansion.

With this new demand for intelligence services, the Koga-Ninja secured a variety of secret alliances and treaties which provided rights for peasants (both in property and personal), merchants and anyone else who was below Samurai status. These treaties secured for the common man some sense of justice...providing that the country could be re-united.

When these treaties were established the Koga-Yamabushi, with the help of a former Koga double agent, Masahige Kusunoki, formed the Kusunoki-ryu school. This school taught individual and collective fighting techniques, but also brought a new, formal dimension to the system of Ninjutsu. This dimension was dedicated to spying and espionage.

Masahige Kusunoki based his teachings on his personal experiences. These experiences included his being a Koga agent who had infiltrated the Iga-Ninja ranks. He was so successful that he earned his way, within this clan, to a position of great authority. Eventually, he was even put in charge of operating a ring of forty-eight Iga-Ninja agents who were stationed in the cities of Kyoto, Osaka and Kobe. Their mission was to collect information on hostile clans and agents' movements.

Kusunoki's teachings still remain guarded--especially

his implementation for techniques of counter intelligence. These teachings are exclusively Koga and have never been adopted as an official part of the Iga system's teaching.

Kusunoki attributed his success as a spy to his ability to appeal to his enemies ultimate weakness--ego. He wormed his way into the Iga ranks with flattery which was often mistaken for true loyalty. The Koga, on the other hand, rewards rank only with victory through struggle. The greater the struggle, the greater the loyalty perceived and therefore the greater the reward.

For the Koga-Yamabushi it was demanded in the teachings that one be free of ego: "You can only find true strength within yourself. Seek your true self and there you will find your salvation and the freedom to fulfill or deny your desires."

The Iga-Ninja, although still highly disciplined, began to deteriorate into a symbol of perversion. The Iga leaders, lacking idealistic goals and aims, hoped perhaps that their wealth, power and their acceptance of the Bushido Code would earn them acceptance among the Japanese ruling class. This is evident today as some Iga descendants continue to cling to the ideas of Bushido. Some Iga-Ninja philosophers even say that it is an integral part of Ninjitsu. But, this is only based on ancient propaganda which called for or described the acceptance of Bushido by the Iga.

Of course, the acceptance of Bushido by those families of Ninjitsu who clinged to the principles of the original

Yamabushi, saw the Iga's acceptance of Bushido as the ultimate sell-out of traditional Ninja values. An absurdity without comparison, saw the Iga-Ninja being hired and made wealthy by doing deeds that the Samurai were prevented from doing, bound by the Bushido code.

As for the Koga groups, they were still the most valued and feared of all Ninja. For, in a land of chaos, the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja was a disciplined creature. In a land without morals, he was motivated by a moral code that was almost saintly-- devoid of greed and the passions of the flesh. He did not kill for himself or for personal gain--a killing machine that was not available for hire. Unthinkably, he became the secret answer to the chaos that permeated the Sengoku Era. The Ninja became that answer because he/she was maticulously honed, over centuries of struggle, for great sacrifice.

During those four centuries of ceaseless civil war and petty power struggles, the Ninja increased their advantage over the Samurai with new strategy and tactics through technology.

In 1543, the Ninja acquired guns (firelocks) from Portugese traders. It was not, however, until the Imperial Restoration in 1868 and the Satsuma Rebellion a decade later that guns played a decisive role in Samurai military encounters. In other words, Ninja tactics were over three hundred years ahead of the Samurai's.

On the other hand, the introduction of firearms did not alter the Ninja's traditional methods of espionage, but merely enhanced his effectiveness and allowed him to expand the use of these tactics on an even greater scale. One such variance was the creation of the "poison water-wheel." This was a device that looked like a giant ferris wheel. The wheel would go around with Ninja warriors hidden inside tiny cubicles attached to the wheel. From each cubicle, as it reached the peak of the wheel, the Ninja would shoot out, down'into a courtyard of a defending castle or stronghold. They could pick off the guards at will, until they could no longer man the walls, then the final assault would take place.

The use of smoke grenades had been present as a part of the Ninja's tricks since the Chinese contributions under

Shotoku. However, the hotter burning powder of the Portugese made for pocket-sized guns that could be disguised as walking sticks, flutes or knives. It even made possible the development of bombs, explosive arrows, land-mines and wooden cannons. Some of the later were even made small enough to be operated like bazookas.

Although Koga Province was ruled by more than fifty Ninja family groups, only two old families by 1578 held sway in Iga Province. The Hattori family governed the central sector of the Province, while the Momochi clan ruled the south.

However, under the alias of the Fujibayashi family, the Momochi clan established ties and control over several Koga sub-groups. These Koga-subgroups defected to the Iga under promises of great wealth and power. This led to a common historical error that the Koga and Iga clans were finally aligned.

In 1562 the Koga clans support played a decisive role for Lord Nobunaga Oda and his two generals, Hideyoshi Toyotomi and Ieyasu Tokugawa. With the support of the Koga and the information that they provided Nobunaga, the Koga made it possible for him to re-unify Japan, gain dominance over the Imperial court and the Shogunate (military government) itself by 1568.

Besides intelligence information, Koga Ninja helped Nobunaga obtain muskets and cannons from Portugese traders. The Koga also helped in the training of peasant soldiers who proved equally effective as Samurai soldiers.

In 1573, the Shogunate was abolished for all practical purposes. During this time the Iga (whose leadership was rejected despite numerous attempts to join the ruling class) aligned themselves with various Buddhist sects.

The Buddhists, swayed by the Iga, moved toward the goal of overthrowing Nobunaga and even sponsored several assassination attempts by Iga-Ninja. The Iga mission, however, produced nothing but failures. The Buddhist's hatred of Nobunaga grew to such proportions that they disassociated themselves from the Koga-Yamabushi altogether, since these Ninja had former ties with Nobunaga.

This hatred was spawned in the fact that Nobunaga had welcomed Christian missionaries. He did this, in part, to offset the Buddhist's powerful priesthood. Another reason for their hatred was Nobunaga's efforts to thwart the Buddhist's political influence in the country.

The Buddhist's enmity as well as the repeated attempts to assassinate him, led Nobunaga, now Shogun (military dictator), to demolish the most powerful of the great Buddhist monasteries around Kyoto and capture the castle/monastery of Osaka. At the time, this castle was held by the "True Pure Land Buddhists". The Shogun's success broke the temporal power of the Buddhist sects.

Hoping to strengthen their alliance, the Iga-Ninja became converts of Buddhism and incorporated the religious teachings of certain sects into their art. This religious infusion caused Iga-ninjitsu to undergo a transformation,

making that style an almost occult practice. The Iga lured lost souls into their ranks by promising secret occult powers. This is evident in their "Mikkyo" teachings which are based on a belief in the power of black-magic, a compendium of religious beliefs with foundations in the esoteric tantric lore of India, Tibet and China.

The "Mikkyo" teachings still exist as an elaborate religion, the esoteric or tantric side of Buddhism. The Iga formalized these beliefs which are known as "Shingon Buddhism".

This occult belief of power generation through Mikkyo involves the combined use of "mantra" (sacred or charged words), "mandala" (schematic pictorial renderings of the structure of the universe, used for the direction of concentration), and "mudra" (energy-channelling hand postures) for the total concentration of energies and personalities. The bringing together of thought, specific words and hand gestures, in harmonious alignment is supposed to allow each quality to compliment the other. Thusly, the Iga professed this would give them supernatural strengths. This power is referred to as the "sanmitsu", the three secret components of "Mikkyo" spiritual power.

The Koga, on the other hand, developed ritualized forms of meditation called "Kuji-kiri" or "nine hands cutting." The kuji-kiri was a hand positioning exercise which allowed the Ninja to collect his thoughts leaving him in a state of peace and free of want. This allowed him to look back into the material world (where he knew he was

grounded) from a heightened, enlightened perspective. This exercise gave the Koga-Ninja the ability to understand the intricate inner workings of all aspects of daily life (cause and effect) and find value in himself.

The Iga "borrowed" the Kuji-kiri and assigned jumon mantra, charge words (rin, pyo, toh, sha, kai, jin, rets, sai, zen) to the accompaniment of weaving fingers. A finger was interlaced for each of the nine steps or "levels of power." Each jumon mantra was taught to the Iga student as having a particular personification of some cosmic aspect or supreme deity that assisted in the directing of occult power. This ancient belief is portrayed by Japanese film-makers with an actor dressed in Ninja garb, interweaving his fingers, mumbling words under his breath and "puffff" he disappears in a cloud of smoke or shrinks to the size of a match-box to sneak by unsuspecting guards.

Since the Koga clans still felt strongly tied to their Yamabushi forerunners, the idea of Buddhist persecution alarmed them. At the time that the Iga clans were adopting Buddhist principles and procedures, the Koga-Ninja offered their assistance to the Buddhist cause. However, they were rejected by the Buddhists who were now under the Iga's influence.

This rejection came in the form of an execution of a Koga messenger, carrying a call for peace, strength through unity. Their unity in the past had protected Buddhist priests, who took refuge in the Koga mountains.

After a serious attempt by Iga-Ninja to kill Nobunaga, which resulted in the death of persons close to him, Nobunaga developed a burning hatred for the Iga. In response to this hatred he dispatched his army in the winter of 1581 to invade Iga province.

In less than a week, Nobunaga brought the area under his control. He was successful because the Koga-Ninja had infiltrated the Iga ranks and could identify their members and diagram their spheres of influence. Koga and Iga fought each other with an absolute hatred. In the end, over 4,000 Iga-Ninja were killed. Among the dead were members of those Koga sub-groups who had previously defected to the Iga. The Koga's casualties numbered less than one hundred.

During their many battles, it was difficult for an outsider to determine who was winning, since both sides were in black from head to toe. However, the Iga traditionally wore their head and face coverings different than the Koga. Theirs stopped below the nose, while the Koga-Ninja wore theirs above. Today, the Iga-Ninja makes no distinction between the two's style of dress, perhaps hoping that no one will notice.

Another result of the Iga's defeat was that their sacred scrolls, detailing the Iga's ranks and fighting manuals was captured intact and presented to Nobunaga. Today, these scrolls and manuals are in the possession of many Japanese museums. Among the scrolls captured were those that detailed the histories of the Koga sub-groups who betrayed the original fifty Koga family groups. The loss (or enemy possession) of these scrolls marks the very end of the existence of a particular ryu of Ninjitsu.

Outlining the history, ranks and techniques of a ryu, these scrolls are so sacred to a particular clan that the mere presentation of the information they contain to an outsider is a crime punishable by death. The usual execution for such a crime was being boiled in water.

This kind of philosophy is still in keeping with those Ninja descendants who do not merely practice or play Ninjitsu, but live it. The crime of even looking at a scroll without a need to know is a serious offense, that is usually reviewed by a tribunal. The sentence is always stiff--sometimes even including death.

The reason for such harsh penalties is summed up by a Koga Masuda Jonin-Ninja leader who commented "Ninja are a people without a country. Our survival and strength is in our anonymity--the ability to come and go without being suspect."

In modern times, in contrast, Iga descendants display ancient scrolls, many of which are copies of those on display in Museums throughout Japan. The Iga's motivation appears to be an eagerness to link themselves and their ryu to the past as a means of obtaining public approval as to their authenticity.

The Koga, in keeping with Ninja tradition and spiritual beliefs, see such public displays as a perversion, not in keeping with the teachings of Ninjitsu. For the strength of a ryu of Ninjitsu comes from within and is therefore independent of the approval of outsiders, (something that would be in direct contrast to the teachings of Ninjitsu).

Another important point regarding the scrolls, is that due to their highly sensitive nature they are coded. Only a highly knowledgeable, expert-cryptographer or "Soke" successor knows the manner in which any particular scroll should be interpreted. In the end, the scrolls are manipulated by any and everyone to serve their own ends and fit their own meanings.

According to another interesting chronicle of battle, during Nobunaga's invasion of Iga province, Sandayu Momochi fought with courage and gallantry in combat. He was killed according to the text by a pistol shot to the head, as was

Hanzo Hattori. Momochi was executed by his best friend, a Koga double-agent.

As painful as the task was, Momochi's body was then taken and buried by the same man who murdered him. This Koga agent detailed, in this account, the fact that Momochi and Fujibayashi were one and the same person. The agent left behind specific details of how Momochi's body was smuggled from one of the many houses that was being used under one of his many personages (i.e. Fujibayashi).

Two of these houses are still standing. A third stronghold called Takiguchi-jo, was razed by Nobunaga when rumors spread that Momochi was still alive. However, out of respect, several of his scrolls were kept for his widow.

Momochi was laid to rest in a family plot, on a hill, opposite one of his former homes. This hillside is found behind Nabari, about 15 miles south of Iga-Ueno. Apparently, this description of events was confirmed by a graves expert who located Momochi's resting place.

After the death of Momochi and Hattori, the next Koga siege was aimed at a strategic stronghold that was situated on a high hill overlooking the city of Iga-Ueno--the Hakuho (White Pheonix) castle. It was built by Lord Takatora Toda who gathered many ronin (masterless samurai) and cut-throats together and trained them with Iga-clan teachers. Toda did this under the auspices of the Hattori clan, believing he could strengthen his position and multiply his wealth.

Toda's notorious descendants barely escaped from their

Koga-Yamabushi rivals and would serve as lineage for the Togakure-ryu clan, of which Gobei Toda was their 20th headmaster.

To the north of this castle was the Momochi/Fujibayashi sponsored Hikone stronghold. This fortress was situated on the east banks of Lake Biwa, now Shiga Prefecture.

Less than a year after the massacre of Iga-Ninja along with their wives and children, the famed warlord Nobunaga was dead. He was killed in Kyoto at the hands of Mitsuhide Akechi, once Nobunaga's own staff colonel.

Old wives tales claim that Hattori, with several of his Iga-Ninja came to the rescue of one of Nobunaga's leading "generals"--Ieyasu Tokugawa. This was, of course, impossible, since Hattori was buried months earlier. But, even if he had survived, it is unlikely that he would have come to the aid of the very man who had instrumented the attacks on the Buddhist strongholds at Osaka and Kyoto. Not to mention that as Nobunaga's general he (in that same year) oversaw and commanded the execution of Iga-Ninja, their wives and children. He also ordered the burning of their crops and farm-houses throughout Iga province.

The wives tale goes on to state that at this same time, Ieyasu Tokugawa was in the small town of Sakai, near Osaka. He was supposedly in danger of being attacked by Akechi's soldiers. This too is more fantasy than fact since Tokugawa is known to never have travelled without a large number of personal bodyguards, in addition to the

forty-thousand troops who were with him at all times and under his direct command.

Ieyasu Tokugawa not only shared Nobunaga's burning hatred of Iga-Ninja, but personally took it upon himself to execute several by burning them alive. He chronicled this in several letters to his field commanders and ordered them to follow his example. We can see, by this example, how the history of Ninjitsu has been corrupted by the few to serve special purposes. And, yet, little has been done to unravel the tangled web of deceptions that have long been held as history.

After Nobunaga was assassinated at Honno-ji in 1582, his vassal and most able commander, Toyotomi Hideyoshi completed the unification of Japan. He established an efficient countrywide administration from the modern Osaka area and introduced a monetary reform, as well as a land survey. In 1592, because of his low social status as a commoner, the son of a woodchopper, and educated in his youth by Ninja, Hideyoshi did not qualify for the rank of Shogun. Instead, he was given the title of "Kampaku" (equivalent to civil chancellor) by the Emperor.

In an attempt to minimize the plots against him, Hideyoshi made extensive use of Ninja and established himself as an accomplished spymaster. Having followed the advice of a Jonin (ninja leader) of the Koga Fukushima group, Hideyoshi assigned friendly and unfriendly daimyo's to domains adjacent to one another. This tactic was continued by the succeeding Tokugawa Shogun.

The Koga-clan's relationship with Hideyoshi grew poor. Many resigned their positions as his bodyguards when Hideyoshi began persecuting Christian missionaries. Hideyoshi charged that the missionaries were political agents of foreign powers, unaware that they had the potential to influence allies of unfriendly daimyos.

In 1587, Hideyoshi issued an edict banning the Christian activities. This was not strictly enforced until

ten years later however, when he became annoyed by feuding between missionary groups. In reaction to his displeasure, he ordered the execution of several missionaries and Japanese converts. Many of these missionaries and converts found refuge among Koga-Ninja families, who hid them and cared for their needs, sometimes up to ten years. Later, when possible, these refugees were smuggled safely out of Japan. The Koga were not motivated to do this for any other reason than a sense of injustice to be corrected.

In 1590, while still in the service of Hideyoshi, Koga agents were sent to Korea. During this time, Hideyoshi requested the Korean government give free passage to his army in order to attack China. The Koreans refused and Hideyoshi retaliated by dispatching an army of 150,000 soldiers, equipped with rifles. The Koga-Ninja's invasion plans and maps, made it possible to take Korea by surprise. Pusan and Seoul fell within two weeks of one another. Koga-Ninja then advised Hideyoshi to turn his attention to China and again make use of the surprise attack.

Instead, his ego bruised by the Korean's refusal to aid him, Hideyoshi sought the complete subjugation of the country. This allowed the Korean government to turn to the Chinese, who now had enough time to adequately reinforce their borders and send a well equipped army to oppose the Japanese. The Japanese were suppressed and peace negotiations were established. The Chinese acted as mediators.

The deteriorating moral climate and the unwillingness

of Hideyoshi to enforce secret agreements made by himself and his predecessor (Nobunaga), scorned the powerful Koga clans. Learning of Hideyoshi's plans to re-invade and occupy Korea in 1597, the Koga-Ninja sought to unseat and replace Hideyoshi with Ieyasu Tokugawa. They did this by giving the Korean general, Yin Sun Sin, Hideyoshi's battle plans and a list of his vulnerabilities. This same list, eventually led to the development of "Turtle Ships".

The Turtle Ships were perhaps the first iron-clad battle ships. On the advice of the Koga-Ninja, the ships were outfitted with iron panels which covered the decks and galley. These panels protected the rowers inside. The ships were also equipped with a long, iron battering-ram that was shaped like a turtle's head (hence the name).

The Turtle Ships were impervious to any of the weapons that the Japanese had brought with them, thus the Japanese were defeated before they ever reached Korean shores.

In 1598, the same year as this defeat, Hideyoshi died at the hands of a Koga-Ninja agent. This agent, according to a Koga Ninja legend, was only nine years old. Because Hideyoshi's palace was lined with secret trap doors and various booby-traps, raiding from the outside was impossible. It was seen, therefore, that if one could befriend someone intimately close to Hideyoshi, one could get by such obstacles and reach him.

This young Ninja befriended Hideyoshi's seven year old son, Hideyori. The offspring would play with the young Ninja. Eventually, the little Ninja learned where Hideyoshi

slept and the plan was laid. The young Ninja, after being invited to sleep in the palace, climbed into the rafters and made his way to Hideyoshi. From above, using only a thread, the young Ninja decanted poison which slipped down the thread and into Hideyoshi's mouth. The boy returned to his palace bedroom and the next morning, Hideyoshi never awoke.

Following the internal chaos that was produced by Hideyoshi's death, Ieyasu Tokugawa was named as successor. The Kanto-based daimyo, was the most powerful and astute strategist among Hideyoshi's vassals, which is why (many believed) Ieyasu had worked with the Koga-Ninja and engineered Hideyoshi's defeat in 1597 and death a year later.

Perhaps the strongest reason Ieyasu was suspected of working with Koga Ninja was the memory of how, at the battle of Mikatagahara, Ieyasu suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Takeda forces and their cavalry strategy. At the battle he revealed Ninja archery skills which, combined with his bold and Ninja like determination won him the reputation of "First Archer of the Kaido," and became one of the most outstanding achievements of his career.

Ieyasu was challenged by a coalition of daimyos, but defeated it decisively at Sekigahara in central Japan in 1600. Three years later, he was appointed Shogun and established the Bakufu (public works project in Edo, modern Tokyo).

The Tokugawa dynasty, with the superior help of the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja, remained supreme for the next 250 years. Their downfall came with the United States warships in 1853 and 1854.

Ieyasu's first and most pressing order of business was to consolidate power over the daimyos. First, he made himself untouchable by surrounding the Edo castle with undercover, Koga-Ninja who could arise in any emergency to protect him, while seeking out plots against him in the streets.

At the advice of the Koga-Ninja leaders, he never slept in the same bed-chamber twice in a row. He then surrounded himself (inside his suite) with Koga who had previously infiltrated Iga ranks. These former double agents were sure to recognize any Iga agents who were lurking about. This occasionally occurred when an unfriendly daimyo would call upon Ieyasu and Iga-Ninja would emerge as servants in their entourage.

For political control, Ieyasu took another lesson from his Koga-Ninja friends. He divided the lords into three categories. The first category was "Shimpan;" twenty-three lords who were natural allies because of their kinship through birth relation to the Tokugawa line. In Koga-Yamabushi Ninjitsu the ones who share this same distinction are known as Jonin.

"Jonin" were Ninja leaders, allied to the various families by birth and the exodus to Japan under Prince Regent Shotoku. They were responsible for policy and

decision making.

The second category in the heirarchy was "Fudai," made up of one hundred forty-five hereditary lords who had been allies of Ieyasu before the battle of Sekigahara. This category correlates to the "Chunin" Ninja ranking.

The "Chunin" were men and women responsible for the training and the very discipline of the Ninja art as a whole. Each had his own sub-group and would decide who did what. If a large attack was in order, the Chunin would lead the attack.

"Tozama," Ieyasus's third category of daimyos, were those ninety-eight outer lords who had submitted to the Tokugawa power only after 1600. Ieyasu based this category on the "Genin" Ninja rank.

The Genin were Ninja operatives who made up the sub-groups. These men and women were the ancient counterparts to James Bond, 007.

These men and women with their extremely well-honed skills of combat and illusion were singly responsible for the reputation of the Ninja's as "magicians of mayhem."

The most interesting safeguard of the entire heirarchy came as a result of the tumultuous beginnings of the clans. Because many of the front-line warriors were captured, or as in the case of Momochi/Fujibayashi where forty-nine Koga sub-groups betrayed their clan, the Genin never met nor would be allowed to even know his or her Jonin's identity. In this way the Ninja's loyalty was always kept in check by the rank above him.

VIII

Ieyasu Tokugawa relied on the first two categories (Shimpan and Fudai) to check the "outer" daimyo's power, these being the richest and most powerful. Rewarded with high civil and military posts, the first two loyalist groups were placed in control of strategic areas and cities on the main route of communication (the Tokiado) and in those areas adjacent to the potentially troublesome domains in Kyushu and northern Honshu.

These secondary leaders made extensive use of Koga-Ninja for intelligence gathering and police work. This was a fairly simple task, since the Koga already possessed an extensive network of experienced agents throughout Japan. This allowed the Koga-Ninja to hunt down and eliminate Iga-Ninja who escaped after their defeat by the Koga and Nobunaga in 1581. The Iga were scattered to the four corners of the country, with the majority returning to their previous professions as cut-throats and robbers.

By this time, the Iga were unorganized and continually feuding amongst themselves, being devoid of any real kind of leadership.

The most famous of the Iga robbers was Goemon Ishikawa. He was one of Momochi's leading Chunin who was turned into a lovable rogue by fiction writers, the same way that the legend of Billy the Kid or any other western outlaw and murderer was twisted into a cultural hero.

The cold reality is that sometimes generations pass and fiction is stretched, keeping a myth alive by a people who no longer know where truth ends and fantasy begins. As in the case of Ishikawa, he was thought of as a sort of Japanese Robin Hood. However, at the time of his arrest, he was less than popular with all the people. Ishikawa's fate was to be boiled alive, in public view, in a huge caldron of water and oil. His head was then severed from his body, transported to Iga Province and placed on display.

Of the loyalist daimyos, the branch families of the Tokugawa Shogunate held strong points in the three most strategic areas--the Kanto plains, the Nagoya region in central Japan and the Osaka region. Here, schools of Ninjitsu were established for the training of bodyguards, spys and the formal introduction of police tactics. After training, these Ninja were sent to Edo.

On the advice of his Koga-Ninja Jonin, Ieyasu installed a system of residence whereby daimyos were required to maintain homes and reside alternately in Edo and in their own fiefs. This residency law ("Sankin-kotai"), allowed the Koga-Ninja to study each daimyo and compile a personal dossier, for intelligence purposes on all the lords and their many associates.

During a daimyo's absence from Edo, they had to leave their families behind as hostages. As part of the Togukawa surveillance, Koga-Ninja established checkpoints on all the important routes, for the purpose of (among other things) "looking for women leaving Edo and firearms entering Edo."

The Koga-Ninja knew that the requirement of double residency would be costly and weaken the daimyo's position, especially since it called for a procession every other year. According to the history of Milton W. Meyer and the United States Library of Congress:Country Studies/Area Handbook Program, "as much as a quarter of the daimyos annual income was spent on alternate residences. In addition, daimyos were obligated to make generous contributions to the Bakufu--sponsored public works projects, the administrative authority which ruled the nation under the Tokugawa Shogun."

Moreover, the possibility of a coupe was minimized by edicts forbidding alliances between daimyos. This part of the law was kept in force by the Koga-Ninja.

Another edict (the "Buke Sho-Hatto") forbade daimyos to build or repair castles, or contact the imperial court without prior authorization. In order to stabilize the social base of the political order, a rigidly stratified hereditary/occupational class structure was instituted. This was fortified by status-oriented Confucianism (chinese morality, concerned with the development of harmony through man's realization of his social duties).

At the top of the structure were the Samurai. The Samurai's elite status was distinguished not only by his control of administration and military positions, but by the exclusive right of wearing two swords--Katana (long sword) and Wakazashi (short companion sword). Out of thirty million Japanese, the Samurai only constituted about five

to seven percent of the population during the Tokugawa period.

In the last decade of the 16th century, the Samurai underwent some change. Until that time many Samurai enjoyed the distinction of owning land, some being former peasants with small land-holdings. Joined by peasant recruits, in time of war they performed military duties. After the turn of the seventeenth century, the Samurai class became frozen as a hereditary, privileged, warrior-bureaucrat group whose membership was determined solely by birth. They were prohibited from intermarrying other lower classes.

This effectively meant that peasants could no longer study the martial arts, they could no longer serve in the military. All members of the Samurai class became defined as warriors, but not all were now bureaucrats. The majority of Samurai lived in castle-towns where the daimyos, who constituted the very top layer of the class, maintained feudal authority. A minority of Samurai lived as landed aristocrats, but most received stipends of rice, which corresponded in amount to their official rank.

Despite the collective elitism, the Samurai were not socially equal. There was a great difference between upper and lower Samurai, the determination of which was measured by wealth, rank and income. Typically, lower ranking Samurai performed the less desirable duties as foot-soldiers, guards and clerks.

The peasantry had "second rank" status because they accounted for eighty percent of the nation's population and

were the main contributors to the country's role as a major producer. Artisans and merchants were placed third and fourth in the cultural scheme of things. This placing was also done, respectively due to Confusian ethics. Both occupations were thought of as being economically unproductive. Still further below the status of artisans, the most contemptable occupations were the shoemakers, tanners and butchers.

Left entirely outside the social ranking system were the Koga-Ninja who were in the exclusive employ (technically) of the Shogunate. Because of their origins, the Ninja were considered officially as separate citizens. In essence, they were a people without a country.

The decision to separate the Ninja socially, was based on the fact that their ancestors were brought to Japan by Shotoku. However, some Koga-Ninja (their identity as Ninja being secret to everyone except the Shogun) were awarded the title of Samurai so that they could carry out their tasks in a more efficient manner. Under secret orders of the various Tokugawa Shoguns, several Samurai families underwent the rigors of and indoctrination of Koga Ninjitsu. Among these Samurai famalies a handful would secretly abandon the bushido code and take their place amongst the Koga Ninja community, forming their own Ninja sub-groups.

One such sub-group was the Yagyu family whom, secretly Ninja, established the Yagyu school of swordsmanship in order to cultivate information. The Yagyu school,

established in 1600, is still in existence today. Their Kenjitsu (sword-combat) style is the closest to the purest Ninja's. In film, the Yagyu family's secret identity was visualized in "The Seven Deadly Sins".

The Shogunate developed an effective centralized bureaucracy under a prime minister (a post that was often vacant) a council of state consisting of several senior counsellors, a group of junior counsellors, plus numerous

judicial and administrative officers.

The social structure in all its complexity, was slowly becoming more and more dependent upon the Koga-Ninja. The Ninja were now acting as secret police, informing the Shogun of potential trouble spots, which included the bakufu bureaucracy, the daimyos and the imperial court itself (in Kyoto) where the Emperor and the court nobility continued in their limited ceremonial functions financially dependent on the Shogunate.

The Koga-Ninja existed, even more than ever as a faceless, secret society with powers both officially leading to the Shogun as well as their own, well-trained network. Their Iga rivals were hunted down to the point that only a handful of practitioners escaped. The Iga's mainstay of survival became then farming, with Ninjitsu but a hobby.

The secrecy of the Koga society was so complete --knowledge of their existence as an organization exclusively belonging to the Shogunate's inner sanctum--that martial arts historians such as Don Draeger presumed that they had all died out and ceased to exist. In fact, to the contrary the "real golden age of Ninjitsu" was just beginning and would last up until 1912.

IX

During the Momoyama (1568-1603) and the Edo (1603-1868) periods, the Koga Yamabushi Ninja never forgot the ideals of a class struggle. They merely re-examined and re-defined their tactics. First, the Koga Ninja would strive to work within the system and infiltrate strategic administrative positions, or find a means of pressuring those who opposed them to submit to their control. Second, they would play upon the weaknesses in the class structure in order to rally the masses to act in their own behalf. Third, they would keep their own structure intact and alliances strong. They realized that the culmination of these tactics--their acquiring absolute, decisive power--would take place over generations.

To this end, the "three hundred year plan" was developed and chronicled in 1601, when Jonin realized that someday there would come an opportunity to leave Japan for good and establish themselves in a land of equal or better opportunity.

Because of the length of such a plan, each Ninja had to take a solemn oath/covenant known as the "Ninja No Chigiri." This oath is hereby presented below:

NINJA NO CHIGIRI

(Ninja Oath)

I shall vanish into the night, change my essence to wood, to stone, sink deep into the earth and pass through that which cannot be passed.

I shall fly like a bird and live in the sky, or I shall become a fish, breath beneath water.

I shall be murdered many times, but I shall not perish; I shall change my face and become invisible at will, able to walk amongst all living creatures without being seen.

I am Ninja, my father the heavens, my mother the earth.

I am Ninja, my castle is my body.

I am Ninja, my power is loyalty.

I am Ninja, my magic is in the way of training.

I am Ninja, my life and death is breathing when no breath can be taken.

I am Ninja, my body always in control.

I am Ninja, my eyes see everything, they are the Sun and the Moon.

I am Ninja, my ears are sensitivity, they hear what is never spoken.

I am Ninja, my laws are self-reliance.

I am Ninja, my strength is adaptability.

I am Ninja, my secret is taking every opportunity with fullness.

I am Ninja, my best friend is myself.

I am Ninja, my enemy is carelessness.

I am Ninja, my protection is answering before questioned.

I am Ninja, my weapons are all that does and does not exist.

I am Ninja, my strategy, my way is without want or desire. I am nothing for myself and I am everything for myself.

My Way is Ninjitsu--I am Ninja.

Today, this oath still exists and is taken by Koga

Ninja clan descendants as they are inducted into their clans. They are also awarded, at this time, their rank, title and ceremonial black garb. They are presented with their swords, and are given a personal present of something belonging to their master.

This master/mentor then gives the new clan member a name that is exclusively Ninja. This name is coded to the point that only another Koga Ninja, by secret knowledge, would know whether or not this was indeed a legitimate Ninja name. Thus, the bearer is identified as not a person merely knowledgeable, but an accepted integral part of the Koga clans.

This renaming ceremony is done in order to protect the real identities of clan members--their names committed to record so that in case of compromise the clan would never be in any kind of real danger.

This brings up an important point. Ninjitsu documents have very little practical value as to legitimacy. Documents, it is realized, are easily forged. Coded scrolls can be twisted to any truth.. Testimonies can be exaggerated or falsified. The truth, therefore of being Ninja is in the doing (achieving a spirit and skill sharper than the edge of a blade). This is the true doctrine of the Ninjitsu of the Koga Yamabushi.

One can also conclude that another reason why Koga Ninja were not motivated to keep open, not cryptic records was due to the memory of how, by their compromise, Iga records allowed the Koga to hunt down and eliminate their

adversaries. The Iga's excellent record keeping was their unfortunate undoing.

Today, the history of Koga clans are considerably chronicled in letters from one daimyo to another, in Dutch ship-logs, and in secret archives kept in the possession of Koga descendants. History, especially to the Koga-Ninja, is an integral part of the Ninja's training. But this history must be preserved in his mind, where it can never be compromised or misplaced.

Another factor which strengthened the Koga clan's position, were the Tokugawa edicts of behavior to be enforced. These prescribed functions and standards of behavior for each class and social relationship. These edicts, strongly influenced by a national orthodoxy were compounded of Samurai and Confucian ideals, stressing, among other things absolute loyalty to the ruler and filial piety to the family head.

Confucian ethics suited well the political needs of the Shogunate, given their emphasis on status distinction, paternalism and the importance of servant/daimyo relationships. Social inequality was also sanctioned by the criminal provisions for liability and punishment, which applied differently to each of the four classes.

For instance, a merchant who didn't consent to having his wife sleep with a daimyo could be killed by the daimyo and the daimyo would go free. On the other hand, should the merchant even look at the daimyo's wife, or forget to bow (a symbol of his servitude) he could be imprisoned or have

his head chopped off.

There was no equality or justice among the classes. The Samurai class was, as they were prior, exempt from legal liability. The Koga Ninja, however, rather than take direct action as in the past for reprisals, plotted and invented evidence and introduced this evidence as members of the secret police. Thus, an overly cruel Samurai found himself facing charges of treason, which resulted in his death at the hands of another Samurai. The end was the same, only the methods had changed.

Insuring social and political stability, a policy of national seclusion (which had been introduced in the early 7th century) was re-introduced. Beginning in 1600, British and Dutch traders began to appear in Japan in competition with the Portuguese and Spanish who were very well established. These newcomers, primarily protestant, implied to the Shogun that the Spanish and Portuguese intended to conquer the country.

Ieyasu became distrustful of all westerners with the exception of an Englishman--Will Adams, who hailed from Gillingham in Kent. Adams had been found by Koga Ninja who after teaching him their ways, brought Adams before Ieyasu. He soon became the Shogun's most honoured adviser and intelligencer, awarded the title of Samurai. The modern novel "Shogun" is based upon his life. Adams also had the distinction of being the first caucasian to study ninjitsu and achieve Chunin Ninja status. These facts were revealed in a letter by Captain Richard Cocks who, in 1613, arrived

in Japan to establish a British trading station.

Ieyasu's successor ordered the expulsion or execution of almost all foreign missionaries.

More severe persecutions followed, triggering a rebellion in Nagasaki in 1638. The Bakufu's suppression of the revolt resulted in the destruction of the Christian community, which numbered perhaps 300,000 and was centered in Kyushu. The rebellion allowed Koga Ninja to establish friendly and exclusive relations with foreigners. Contacts with the "outer" world were forbidden by the Shogunate and by 1640 all foreigners were expelled.

Afterwards, a handful of Dutch and a few Chinese were allowed to trade at Nagasaki under the most rigorous restrictions. This trading was overseen by the Koga Ninja who used the opportunity to establish ties with the Dutch in helping smuggle Christians out of Japan.

The Dutch also provided the Koga with technological advancements in the way of optics, arms and explosives, aiding the Koga in keeping their keen advantage over the Samurai. The isolation completely halted the flourishing foreign trade of the previous centuries and cut Japan off from the rest of the world. Except for the Koga Ninja, Japan remained secluded until the middle of the 19th century.

The Koga Ninja knew that the existence of a Samurai warrior class depended upon the existence (or constant threat) of a state of war. There are in Koga Ninjitsu, three inherent freedoms. The first is physical freedom, coming and going as one pleases. The second is social freedom, status not dependent on birth, sect or appearance. The third freedom (and the one that the Samurai didn't allow for) was economic freedom, having the ability and resources to raise your quality of life.

According to the prescripts of the "300 year plan," the Koga would disrupt the class status by insuring a peace where the warrior class would become defunct. Within this atmosphere, the peasants and the merchants would flourish.

Once economic freedom was attained, the raising of the other classes to levels of equality would follow. This would happen, because the Samurai would be forced to make concessions in order to insure economic freedoms for themselves.

The prolonged domestic tranquility during the Tokugawa period, had predictable results: the development of internal commerce, the growth of urban centers and the rise of (as predicted) the merchant class. Other results included, the construction of public roads and extensive public works projects, which served the objectives of the Shogunate.

These objectives were served, first by draining the financial resources of potentially dangerous daimyos, then by providing a road network for speedy communications and effective surveillance, and finally by promoting trade.

Rapid courier service was instituted. The couriers (Ninja) were credited with being able to cover 100 miles in less than a day. A large market for goods and services developed in Osaka, Edo and provincial, fortified towns where Samurai were concentrated. The merchant class prospered and expanded, as did associations of craftsmen and tradesmen. Urban growth stimulated the gradual change over from a rice to a money economy. Credit instruments developed. Rice exchanges were established in Osaka and Edo, the financial centers of the nation.

Koga-Ninja were in Edo, officially placed in the capacity of public, uniformed police. Thusly, the Ninja constituted the first official police force of Japan. The "Jitte," a Ninja weapon used to disarm a swordsman became a symbol of authority. Today, it is still awarded to police in Japan. The Jitte, to a Japanese police officer, being equivalent to the badge and "billy-club" of a New York, Irish cop.

As the merchants and artisans grew richer and, therefore more powerful, the peasants and ruling class experienced a paralleled decline in their own economic status. The peasants suffered because of the irregular taxations of the daimyos and the declining value of rice as the money economy expanded. The money economy tended to

undermine the rigidly compartmentalized social structure and the basis for sociopolitical stability.

Deprived of military employment in the long Tokugawa peace, some Samurai became bureaucrats and scholars. Others wandered the country aimlessly, in a deep depression. The lucky ones were offered the unproductive and insulting role as retainers on reduced incomes. As the early simplicity of warrior life gave way to urban refinements, the economic needs of the Samurai slowly grew while his income diminished.

Many Samurai turned to robbery, easily caught and/or killed by the Koga-Ninja acting as secret police. Many Samurai disobeyed the Tokugawa edicts and intermarried with the families of merchants or prosperous peasants, while still others were reduced to entering occupations formerly reserved for the lower classes.

Gradually, the Ninja's 300 year plan was clearly taking root. The indebtedness of the Samurai, the daimyos and the Shogun themselves increased and the wealth of the country passed into the hands of the merchant class.

In fact, by 1850 the Shogunate was virtually bankrupt. The aristocracy of birth was still at the top of the social order, but status no longer corresponded to individual economic power.

In addition, as economic stresses were intensified, the frequency of discrepancies concerning the Samurai's observance of the official standards of behavior (code of loyalty--bushido) increased. More and more Samurai were

being picked up by the Koga police as traitors to the edicts. Ritual suicides became a common occurrence.

The Tokugawa period also marked the surging of new intellectual currents. The Buddhist clergy were the leaders of scholarly endeavors. Samurai contributed greatly through their compilation of historical works, to laying the foundations for historiography upon which, (said noted historian John Whitney Hall) "modern historical research first depended."

It is important to note that the Koga-Yamabushi Ninja were the secret arm of the Shogunate. Thusly, to even mention their name was a direct violation of the Shogun's Secret--an unwritten edict which could be violated simply by uttering the word "ninja." In such a case, one would lose face and ritual suicide would be the only honorable solution.

Samurai, therefore guarded their words and little mention exists of the Koga-Ninja secret police.

Most historical data, again, comes in the form of letters from one daimyo to another. Some of these letters even bear the seal of the imperial court and are directions and orders that were to be passed on to the daimyo's Jonin contacts. The letters were authenticated, translated and are still in the possession of the Defense Intelligence Agency in their archives. They were made available in the development of the U.S. Army Handbook's on Japan under William Evans-Smith, Director of Foreign Area Studies, The American University, Washington D.C.

The most accurate and detailed accounts, as were previously stated, of the Koga Yambushi Ninja are in the form of Ship Logs and Journal entries by Dutch sea captains.

In 1720, (according to one of these Dutch chronicles) perceiving the potential benefit to be derived from western science, the Shogunate relaxed its restrictions on western learning (yo'gaku) or Dutch learning (ran'gaku)--terms applied interchangeably with the study of western science, medicine and languages.

Interest in military science increased dramatically, but only much later, when Japan was faced with foreign threat.

The study of western sciences had little political impact, being confined to a very small number of government appointed officials and scholars. The "secret police" (Koga Ninja) were no longer secret and were officially a part of this group.

The early Tokugawa measures to establish educational facilities in 1630, eventually led to the establishment of a Confucian College, later to be known as the "Shoheiko." Following suit, by the middle of the nineteenth century about 270 domain schools were functioning. Their job was to school the Samurai, for whom there had been 1,500 private academies set up in the larger towns.

Commoners were educated in about 11,200 schools (terakoya), which were often attached to local Buddhist temples. They also received education in 600 officially

sponsored schools (gogaku). Male literacy reached an unheard of 40 to 50%, female literacy about 15%.

Over 17,000 schools of various kinds were in operation--many were administered and staffed by Koga Ninja who were backing further and further into the shadows of Japanese history. At this time, the Shogun's favorite expression when discussing his secret police was to refer to them never again as Ninja but as his "Kagemusha," (shadow warriors). Thus, the title Shadow Warrior and Ninja became synonymous.

In 1853, Japan's vulnerability was exposed by the arrival of U.S. warships. Commodore Perry, who commanded the U.S. armada, demanded (among other things) facilities for trade. The anxiety of the Bakufu was heightened by the memory of the shocking defeat and humiliation of the Chinese by the British Naval forces in the Opium War (1839-42). In this war, China was forced to relinquish certain sovereign rights to foreigners.

The Koga Ninja knew that if change were to come to Japan, (and their 300 year plan realized) that "the direct impetus shall come not from within, but from without."

This is why the Koga Ninja guarded and valued secret trade with westerners. By this time, the majority of the clan members were settling in the area of Nagasaki, because of the influx of western trade. Many, it is believed, left Japan and later returned with the help of the Dutch. One story goes that a Koga Ninja left Japan and returned thirty years later, filled with tales of wondrous adventures. These adventures took him to an imperial palace of a European noble. Here, he freed his shipcaptain's brother, who was wrongfully imprisoned there, because of his tax indebtedness to the noble. It is factually substantiated that trading companies employed and sailed with Japanese. This is chronicled in ships' logs.

Unable to resist the "Black Ships" by force, (the name

given to the ships of the invading armada) the Bakufu agreed to their demands after taking the unprecedented step of consulting both the imperial court and the leading daimyos.

In 1854, the first of Japan's modern-day treaties provided for extensive commercial concessions, giving a virtual monopoly on external trade to foreigners. The Japanese were forced to grant extraterritorial status to foreign nationals, thus exempting them from Japanese legal jurisdiction.

These treaties outraged most Samurai who were, for the first time, getting what they had dished out in the way of elitism. Especially angered were the powerful southwestern domains including Satsuma and Choshu. A young Samurai seized political initiative and organized a revolt on the outer feifs. This revolt would soon end with the "shadow warrior" capture of Yoshida Shoin, a Choshu scholar calling for unity under imperial rule. This was a threat to the Shogunate. Shoin also called for a restoration of Japan's integrity by bringing the entire far east under Japan's hegemony. Shoin became the patron saint of Japanese ultra-nationalistic chauvinism.

The Koga Ninja secretly allied themselves with troops of Choshu and with those of Satsuma in 1866, who helped defeat the last (15th) of the Tokugawa Shoguns in 1868. On January 3rd of that same year, the Emperor Mutsuhito was empowered. He took the reigning title of "Meiji" (enlightened rule).

In 1869, with a Koga Ninja escort, the imperial government was moved to Edo and renamed Tokyo (meaning eastern capital).

A secret alliance existed between the imperial court and Koga Ninja. The Ninja had informed the Emperors, over many generations of their 300 year plan. They agreed to ally themselves to the court if the Emperors would consent to the idea of "doing away with the evil customs of the past." In exchange, they would protect the Emperors from the Shogunate and help restore the Emperorship to its rightful position.

Under this basic philosophy, the Emperor proclaimed to bring about unity of "all classes, high and low, to give commoners freedom of choice in occupation and to establish deliberative assemblies."

The process of breaking away from the centuries-old feudal lifestyle was not without difficulties. During the two ensuing decades, the implementation of an essential framework for an effective centralized government and a powerful military establishment (in addition to the foundations for a modern economy) took place. However, the Ninja's role as secret police was becoming less and less needed. Becoming obsolete also was the common purpose which drove men into the ranks of Ninjitsu (i.e. the class struggle). Their goal was now seemingly realized.

In 1869, the daimyos were persuaded (by threat of assassination) to surrender their lands to the throne. Many were allowed to stay on as governors of their respective

domains however, two years later, on the advice of Koga Ninja leaders, the fiefs were abolished and reconstituted into seventy-two prefectures.

But then, for no apparent reason the prefectures were reduced to only forty three, a number which corresponded exactly to the number of practicing Koga Ninja (Jonin) families. The daimyos were replaced as governors and political appointees (some Jonin Koga Ninja) ruled in their places.

Keeping one of many secret treaties with the Ninja, in 1876 the Samurai lost their special privilege of wearing two swords. The Ninja forefathers knew that this would be the last tangible symbol of the Samurai's elite status. The Tokugawa's four-class social status was no longer a reality. Samurai, however would not surrender their swords without an honorable defeat.

The Ninja jitte became especially revered at this time by the police--many of whom were now, once Samurai. With jitte in hand, several would surround a Samurai. And, as the Samurai lashed out his blade would be caught by the jitte's swordguard. Meanwhile, other police would beat the Samurai into submission. Afterwards, the Samurai did not "lose face" and could continue his life with some sense of honor.

This strategy has the clear indication that Ninja are not the bloodthirsty fiends they are made out to be, in contrast to the unbendingly strict Samurai policemen who would commonly gang up on a less fortunate Samurai and kill

or maim him because he would not yield to their command.

In 1877, after opposition to the Meiji reform measures, came a group of conservative ex-Samurai who rallied around Saigo Takamori. Saigo led a major uprising against the government but was easily defeated by the new conscript army of 40,000 men using modern weapons. This defeat took place under the guidance of many Koga Ninja who were absorbed into the military due to their knowledge of modern weapons and tactics. These they learned from their earlier trading relations with the Dutch.

Between 1878 and 1882 two developments speeded up the creation of an all-embracing Japanese secret service. The establishment of a Japanese Army General Staff in 1878 led to the formation of an Army Intelligence Service. Three years later, Ninja masters were employed to form a counter intelligence organization called "Kempei tai."

Disenchanted, in 1881 several low ranking Ninja formed the "Genyosha" (Black Ocean Society) which took it's name from the strip of water called "Genkai nada" which separates Kyushu from mainland Korea. This was a secret society founded by Kotaro Hiraoka to expand Japanese influence overseas and to acquire intelligence from China, Korea, Manchuria and to a lesser extent, Russia.

The struggle for equality continued but did not gain results until the 1890's, after certain legal standards and procedures were adopted, at western insistence. First, Britain in 1894, and all the other powers by 1899, surrendered their extraterritorial privileges. This was due

to Japan's demonstration of modern military capabilities.

In 1894, borrowing the Ninja tactic's of the Yoshitsune-ryu school, Japan moved against China in response to China's claim over sovereignty over Korea. This resulted in the Sino-Japanese war of 1894 and 1895.

In the 1895 treaty of Shimonoseki, in the wake of Japan's quick victory, China recognized Korea's independence. Japan acquired Taiwan, the Pecadores Islands (where Koga Ninja set up schools to establish naval tactics), and the Liao-dong Peninsula in Southern Manchuria.

Japan's ambitions did not go unchallenged, however. Russia took measures to prevent Japan from taking control of Liao-dong. Japan entered into negotiations with Russia over their respective positions and rights in Manchuria and Korea. This action bought the Japanese time to dispatch their secret police (Koga Ninja) to map and plan a military alternative.

Again, utilizing Yoshitsune's tactics which outlined the surprise attack, and without warning, the Japanese Navy bombarded the superior and greater numbered Russian fleet at Port Arthur. Two days later, Japan declared war and dispatched its army.

Many Koga Ninja filled their ranks, including Senzo "Tiger" Tanaka, who was only 16 years old at the time. He was credited with killing several high-ranking Russian officers as well as a representative of the Tsar.

These Ninja became an elite arm of the Japanese

military establishment. Many organized themselves into raiding parties who would penetrate deep behind Russian lines, some into Russia itself. Later they would form a fraternity which would be the foundation of the infamous "Kokuryukai" (Black Dragon Society).

The terror and havoc these Ninja generated had never before been known to the Russian Imperial Court. Even the Tsar's mistress was murdered. But, this took place after the war, when the Tsar vocalized his intent to attack Japan. Her head, according to legend and the memoirs of those close to the Tsar, was laid at the foot of his bed. "An oriental crest, surrounded by nine diamonds over a map of Japan, will be painted in the mistress' blood on the wall," was one of Rasputin's (psychic to the Tsar) many predictions.

The crest of nine diamonds that Rasputin refers to, is that of the Koga Yamabushi Ninja of the Masuda group. Senzo Tanaka was one of the leading members of this group. Many believe, in fact, that Tanaka killed the Tsar's mistress, since he was the most famous Ninja at the time. He was later given ceremonial audience with the Emperor for his bravery and skill during the Japanese-Russo War.

Tanaka became so revered by so many of the people of Nagasaki that he was nicknamed "Tiger" because of his strength, speed and the way he carried himself like a cat.

Being Ninja, his identity now known, Tanaka made it a point to disappear from sight. Many believe Tanaka became the personal advisor to Ryohei Uchida, founder of the Black Dragon Society. That Tanaka returned to Russia disguised as a mongol, in order to organize a Black Dragon spy ring. In reality, Tanaka was joined by a distant relation,

Toshitsuga Takamatsu, an Iga-clan descendent of the Tokagure-ryu style. Takamatsu was a direct descendent of the Tokatora Toda line, who established the Hakuho Castle in the 1500's.

Together, the two traveled through China, perfecting their art. Takamatsu would stay in China approximately eight years. But, before he did return he took a solemn oath not to divulge Tanaka's whereabouts, or even that the two had traveled together.

This secret he would take to his grave. Takamatsu's reasons for travelling with Tanaka, besides friendship, was protection. While in Japan, Takamatsu had been wounded in a sword duel with a Samurai that had left him blind in one eye. This fact was only known by those close to him, and until now, never revealed.

Tanaka would stay in China for four more years, returning not to his home in Nagasaki but to Masuda where he would train and live in peace and secrecy. Tanaka's roots also lay in the Yagyu school of Japan--his father of Yagyu family blood and a Jonin Ninja.

However, Tanaka's solitude would be broken by Major-General Masatake Nakajima, the Intelligence Chief of the Japanese General Staff. Tanaka was then recruited as an advisor as were many other Ninja for the purposes of training and to supervise spying activities in Manchuria and Russia. To complicate matters, the "Tiger's" uncle, Kunishige Tanaka (later General Tanaka) would become Head of Military Intelligence. Senzo Tanaka soon found himself

an aide to Major-General Matsuo Itami who succeeded General Tanaka in 1922. Senzo Tanaka seemed destined for a brilliant military career when he resigned because of political differences and personal convictions. With Tanaka's resignation came the risk of assassination. Several attempts were made on his life, which forced him to take refuge with Ninja family members. He finally was able to come out of hiding twelve years later, when friends of his uncle intervened on his behalf. It was for this reason Tanaka never allowed himself to be photographed and became a recluse.

XII

By 1912 a party system was in existence and the class struggle goals a reality. There was little reason for entering Ninja sub-groups. The Ninja ranks slowly diminished. The Ninja teachings were preserved only by those devout families who still knew their roots and their place as a people without a country.

By 1939 there were but a handful of Ninja families still practicing and preserving the teachings of the art. All Ninja schools either were replaced by Samurai military doctrine or martial sports--Kendo or Judo for example. The Ninja families prospered however, from their ancient ties with various trading and shipping groups.

In 1937 many Ninja families witnessed first-hand the brutality of the Japanese military, and so they formed secret pacts with the Dutch traders who in turn cultivated their services. The Ninja, in turn, had warned the Dutch of Japanese expansionism--of the massacres and atrocities that Japan was committing during its involvement in China and

Mongolia. These atrocities included rape, pillaging and executions of thousands of Chinese citizens, old men, women and children.

When Japan signed the Tripartite Treaty of Alliance in September of 1940, the Ninja were so alarmed by the fascist, racist propaganda of Japan's new ally (the Nazi's) that the Koga Ninja agreed to spy for the British and later for the Americans. They are even credited with trying to hide flyers shot down during Doolittle's air-raid on Tokyo. Many are said to have lit fires to mark key industrial targets. However, not every Ninja worked against the Japanese, just the majority.

One Ninja, loyal to the Japanese Nationalists, on December 7, 1941, drove a Chinese laundry truck through rows of airplanes during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The strategy and tactics employed during this surprise attack is another example of a Yoshisune-ryu tactic with one variation, the planned third air wave would have been launched, followed by an invasion force.

The Koga Ninja regrouped themselves at this time, and several family members took to the mountains. Here they hid, avoiding conscription into the armed forces. Some volunteered, only to sabotage efforts at every opportunity. Little is known about what happened during the war. However, immediately after the war, the Koga Ninja's involvement became such a sensitive subject that no allied official wanted to discuss the subject. Perhaps because then, to publicly discuss those known Ninja agents would

broaden tensions and jeopardize any chances of ever again achieving peaceful relations with the Japanese.

In exchange for services rendered, the American occupational forces promised to protect those Ninja families from Japanese Nationalists who sought to destroy "traitors". However, the Koga clans saw themselves as a people of deep convictions, concern for humanity and justice for all, not the few.

From 1945 to 1952 the Koga families helped with the demilitarization and democratization of Japan by (SCAP) Supreme Commander For The Allied Powers, Douglas A. MacArthur. They did this on a purely consultory basis--their identities as former allied spies never to be revealed.

Years later, however, Tanaka's identity was used by Ian Fleming in the famous James Bond books. Fleming, once a high ranking member of the British secret service, would borrow Tanaka's name for his book, "You Only Live Twice." Here too, he would re-kindle the legend of the Ninja.

Mr. Fleming was known for basing his characters on real-life people. For example, Major Boothroyd was created out of a letter written by a fan by the same name. This "fan" was criticising Bond's usage of a .25 calibre automatic. Fleming then made him a member of Bond's books as "Q", Major Boothroyd, a weapons expert.

Tanaka was remembered by Fleming, perhaps because the "Tiger" was kept as a house guest for three years by the British secret service. He took refuge with them after the

deaths of several Japanese who, during the war, had imprisoned and tortured family members in Nagasaki.

Tanaka was said to be a wild man. He ran up so many personal vendettas that he was becoming more than a political embarrassment. Fortunately, he was given a new identity by American intelligence forces and he left Japan, as did many of his clan, for parts of the United States. Many of those who made the exodus changed their family names. Some to the extent that all traces of Japanese lineage was erased. In example, many former members of the Koga Bisen group took Chinese names since each was required by tradition to travel through China prior to World War II.

Perhaps the greatest ironies the war would produce would be at the hands of the Koga's allies. The majority of Ninja clan members were killed during the Atomic bombing of Nagasaki, their priceless personal archives of Koga Ninja activities destroyed. However, those that did survive were divided between those who wished to stay (but could not for fear of post-war reprisal), and those who could not wait to leave.

Because of the huge Nisei population along the American west coast and Hawaii, many Koga Ninja headed for these areas, especially Northern California and Hawaii.

Many of these exoduses were sponsored by family members and distant relatives, while others, like Tanaka were brought to the U.S. by the influential Sego family. This family owned many prosperous nurseries and gardening services.

In his boyhood, Tanaka had befriended one of the Sego's who was now an accomplished Aikido master. Tanaka was then retained and became content to accept the position as a simple Japanese gardener. Regardless of these facts, many still insist that he was brought over to quell troubles with Chinese Tong (organized crime) members, who were extorting and attacking Japanese community members in San Francisco.

Tanaka did stop in that area first, and it is known that a rash of Tong members and Chinese cut-throats disappeared within a months time. The borders between Japan and Chinatown were finalized after his exit.

In 1955, Tanaka settled in Los Angeles, California. He remarried (about seven years later) but never had any children. The last of forty generations, Tanaka decided to teach his family's guarded, ancient secrets. He started with his nephews (who would later return to Japan), but they seemed unappreciative--embracing the art as a means to spend time, rather than a way of life.

He still kept contact with his Koga Ninja clan, the majority of whom were now prospering throughout the world. One day, Tanaka decided to pick the worst example of an occidental martial artist he could find. He began a trek that brought him to many tournaments. At one of these he was quietly pleased by a young 12 year old who, although coming in dead last, stubbornly refused to accept defeat. The boy never shed a tear even when he found himself facing beatings by 21 year old black belts, because he hd

displeased his Jiu-jitsu instructor, Jack Seki.

The boy was invited to train with Tanaka at his home. Tanaka hoped that the sight of an occidental, outsider would embarrass his nephews and force them to find family pride in mastering the family style. Tanaka's plan worked, but the grueling intensity of the training did not drive the boy away, who never was really expected to stay.

For two years the boy trained along-side the nephews, eventually passing them by with his relentless drive and hunger to learn. He overcame the demanding exercises, both physical and mental. For those two years, the boy did not even know the name of the art he was perfecting. He only knew that it worked, which was enough to sustain him. In exchange for lessons, the boy cooked, cleaned and helped Tanaka, who was now in his eighties, with his gardening jobs.

Soon the essence of the boy overwhelmed Tanaka and he was secretly named his successor. He was named as Tanaka's "Soke," the successor to the Tanaka-ryu line which dated back over forty generations to Prince Regent Shotoku.

The boy learned the most guarded secrets of the Koga-Yamabushi Masuda clan, the entire history of the art to the point that he could now name the masters who invented every single technique, as well as why and how each came about. When the boy reached sixteen years of age, Tanaka brought him to Japan to the legendary Ninja land of Masuda. There, the boy's outstanding abilities shocked and pleased the Ninja community when he tested for the right to

call himself Ninja. He was awarded, in front of all and by Jonin elders of the Koga-clan, the title of Ninja of the Jonin class. He was given this honor, mostly due to his knowledge and understanding of the Jonin ways. He was officially adopted and given a Jonin name.

Tanaka knew that by doing this, the boy's rank and title would be unapproachable by any self-respecting member of the Koga-Ninja clans. His position was solidified.

CONCLUSION

by Gordon F. Richiusa

On July 30th, 1975 Tiger Tanaka chose to die. The week before his death he casually commented to the boy he'd been training that, "it is a good time to die." He then asked his pupil if he shared his dream to "teach all the ways of the Ninja so that all can know freedom, the ability to shape ones destiny."

They talked on many subjects, personal views of the world and the characteristics of humanity. Tanaka lamented on how funny the west viewed time, measuring it like a line from one point to another--birth until death. But, how logical the east's view of life was, measuring time as a circle without end. At a point in the conversation Tanaka and his pupil grew silent. The pupil sat for a while and then, knowing that it was time to leave, said good-bye, rose, bowed slowly and made his exit without another word.

Tanaka was found dead, "of natural causes" sitting in a lotus position, his clothes and belongings neatly marked around him as to who they should be passed on to. He even left specific instructions as to the manner he should be buried. This ceremony was conducted by Koga-Ninja living in California.

Tanaka's death marked the end of the old ways, but Ninjitsu's secret lies in its unique ability to adapt. The boy (now a man) unknowingly was a bonified "Soke." His responsibilities had been given to him by generations of hereditary rules and protocol. He had earned a title which he had never sought, a rank that he had never asked for. His name is Frank William Dux, Shidoshi, founder of the first American, first occidental, first Western-ryu of the Koga-Yamabushi system of Ninjitsu.

Today, Tanaka's dream is slowly being made a reality by Mr. Dux who brought further distinction and honors upon Ninjitsu's modern credibility as well as himself in 1975. It was in that year that he became the first occidental to win world recognition as the International Fighting Arts Association Heavyweight Champion of full-contact kumite (bareknuckle fighting, where everything goes except biting and gauging).

Full-contact kumite is the oldest of traditional unarmed competitions short of dueling, founded by the Black Dragon Society as a means to rate a members' ability and fighting spirit. All martial art styles are welcome and the rules are not set up to give a particular martial art an advantage over another. This is quite common amongst point competitions where contact is forbidden and winning is determined solely by the culmination of points awarded at the discretion of line judges; where a kick scores two points over a one point punch, BOTH delivered to the same target area. In full-contact kumite winning is determined

by knockout or "Mat'e" (submission).

Mr. Dux is the only occidental to achieve World Champion status in full-contact kumite, a title he held for five consecutive years. At the end of that time, Dux retired, undefeated and with four world records. These records include the Fastest Recorded Punch with Knockout (.12 sec.); the Fastest Recorded Knock-out (3.2 sec.); the Fastest Recorded Kick with Knockout (72 mph.); and the Most Consecutive Knockouts in a single tournament (56).

SHINGO OSHIMA, . the former Director of Public Relations for the International Fighting Arts Association (I.F.A.A.) and line judge when Frank W. Dux competed comments "Mr. Dux brought the association and Eastern martial arts world to it's knees. With no opponent lasting more than 30 seconds against Dux, it was decided that 16 high speed cameras would be setup to see whether or not Dux was making sufficient contact to knockout his opponents, that these opponents weren't taking dives. What we found was startling. We were able to measure his incredible speed and revolutionary fighting technique. There was no doubt in anyones mind that Frank W. Dux was the Champion of all time. Never before so many who were Champions in their own right left this grueling event in awe. The chinese nicknamed Mr. Dux, "Pha Ma" (flying horse), a symbol of courage, strength and speed. At the end of Mr. Dux's career he had fought 329 I.F.A.A. sanctioned matches; won 321, lost 1 by knockout (his first time competing); tied 7; and knocked out 229 opponents, each under 1.5 minutes."

Today Mr. Dux is the highest ranking practitioner of the Ninja arts in the Western world who is publicly teaching. People come from all over the world to train with him. Many of his students come through government sources, both from the military and local police agencies. Following in the footsteps of Ninja tradition he served in a clandestine fashion for the U.S. and foreign governments as a special tactics instructor. Until recently, he was forced, through contractual agreements, to keep a low profile about the specifics of his military activities, which earned him numerous decorations and honors.

Presently, Mr. Dux's schools are located in North Hollywood, California and Woodland Hills, from there he hopes to expand the art and solidify his master's dream. In Japan, under Yoshiaki Hatsumi, the Iga clan also flourishes. Hatsumi's tutelage came under Toshitsuga Takamatsu. Hatsumi now is the 34th headmaster of the Iga Tokagure-ryu system of Ninjitsu. Other clans and styles of Ninjitsu also exist, however, as to their legitimacy one can only conclude that the proof is never in the paper, family tree or written testimony. The proof, according to ancient Ninja logic, "is in the doing."

Today, two ranking systems exist in regard to the differing clans. They are as follows:

KOGA-YAMABUSHI

Gijitsusha--(engineer): Responsible for taking the clan forward. Traditionally, his identity is always guarded.

Jonin class

Shidoshi--It means Shi (four), Do (ways of doing), Shi (corpse), or "the four ways of the dead." Shi represents those four ideals a Koga-Ninja must perfect in himself. These are, (1) Benevolence to ones fellow man, that one should, when called upon give of oneself without expectation of return or to have mercy for even ones worst enemy; (2) Courage, to risk all when called upon; (3) Valor, to meet ones "Kiri" (obligations) in the face of overwhelming odds and; (4) Wisdom, the most important element of a Ninja life, to always seek it out. For, knowledge is power, and one always acts out of wisdom, not the preceding three, all-emotional states. (Shi) also the

Chinese letter for corpse lends meaning to Ninjitsu's Chinese roots in the Sun Tzu. Thusly, a Shidoshi is one who is the Master's master, a person who has perfected the four ways and, by doing so is no longer living (for himself). He now lives for the clan and his fellow man. This title is, and has always been revered by Koga-Ninja for centuries.

Chunin Class

Shihan--Master grade, his position was that of a Chunin group leader.

Genin Class

Sensei--"One who has gone before" or "teacher". He is, depending on rank, a minor or low Chunin or high Genin (operative) rank.

Kamarai, Rappa, Suppa, Onmitsu (and in the Edo Era) Shinobi. Ninja operatives with comparable, black-belt status.

IGA/TOKAGURE-RYU

Jonin Class

Headmaster--Supreme Authority, a "Soke" of that particular ryu.

Chunin Class

Shihan--Master, responsible for teaching and discipline.

Genin Class

Shidoshi--This title is written differently from that of the Koga's. According to one of Hatsumi's official representatives in the United States, it means "teacher of the warrior ways of enlightenment." This title, the

representative stated in Kick Magazine, June 1981, was made up exclusively for him by Hatsumi. One historian can only conclude that, either this representative was lying to further his own ends (insinuating that anyone else with the same title was a phoney) or indeed it was made up to degrade and confuse laymen of Ninjitsu that Shidoshi was a very low rank not comparable to that of headmaster.

Shidoshi Ho--This is one who assists the Shidoshi, with very limited powers. Often awarded as a means of honoring one (i.e. an honorary blackbelt to someone who has never studied but has contributed to a particular school or ryu).

THE SCROLL OF A NATION

(The Ninja Influence on Japan's Main Events in Chronological History)

Rooted in a mythical age, when the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu commanded her divine grandson to rule a land of "luxuriant rice fields." Japan's history is that of a people absorbed in their singular, divine destiny, yet profoundly influenced by other cultures.

ca.30,000 B.C.--

Earliest datable traces of human habitation; land bridges suggest linkage of Japan with the Asian mainland.

ca. 10,000 B.C.--

Hunters and followers of the Jomon Culture thrive in small settlements. This is evidenced by hand-formed pottery, decorated with cord patterns. These are among the earliest known in the world.

ca. 300 A.D.--

Metal working, the pottery wheel and irrigated rice cultivation spread from Korea. This new found culture called the "Yojoi" replaces the Jomon; clan alliances and units grow in power.

552--

Buddhism arrives through far-reaching contacts with China and Korea. This is a faith that is just one example of cultural borrowing. Another is the use of Chinese characters for writing.

604--

Influenced by Buddhism and Humanistic Confucianism, Prince Shotoku, regent to the Empress Suiko, drafts a document calling for ethical government and establishes a two hundred year tradition of scholarly missions to China. With the discovery of "Sun Tzu" (The Book Of War), Prince Shotoku imports and surrounds himself with the "greatest accumulation of warrior ways in the history of Japan." A private secret society, only loyal to Shotoku, is formed to help settle civil strife.

645--

Aiming for a central government based on the Chinese model, the Taika Reform abolishes most private land ownership. Secret treaties with Shotoku's secret society (and their descendants) influence the emperor to grant plots to peasants during their lifetime. He also taxes the harvest.

701--

The Taiko Code creates administrative offices and a legal system. Overly harsh judgements and the breaking of secret treaties force the 50 families, descendants of the Shotoku Secret Society, to return to the mountains and fortify themselves.

710--

The Imperial Court moves to the newly built city of Nara, Japan's first permanent capital and urban center. Chinese inspired art and architecture flourish in imposing Buddhist temples, while monasteries increase in number in the provinces. The fifty families now called "Yamabushi," cultivate their skills and resist overly harsh tax collectors.

The legend of Kobiashi spreads to the Imperial Court.

712--

Japan's first written history, the Kojiki, is followed by the nation's first anthology of poems, the Collection of Myriad Leaves.

794--

The Imperial Court establishes Hoi-an-kyo (Kyoto) as "capital of peace and tranquility." Secret pacts are made with the Yamabushi (fifty families) to teach their warrior ways in exchange for exemption from taxation. Violence breaks out between them and their Genji rivals. The Mt. Kurama--Hachi-ryu school is established.

758--

The Fujiwara family secures ruling power as regents to the Imperial throne. They achieve this goal with the help of the Yamashiro (Ninja) Yamabushi family support. The Fujiwara clan secretly funds the Yoshitsune-ryu school of Ninjitsu. In exchange for this funding, top students are recruited and allowed to make up a secret contingency for the royal family.

ca. 1000--

The Heian Court bequeaths Japan a legacy of artistic refinement. Courtiers devote themselves to cultural exercises of calligraphy, poetry, perfecting etiquette and nuances of dress. The land is captured by Lady Murasaki Shikibu in the "Tale of Genji," the world's first novel. The Ninja forerunners have surpassed the warrior tactics of the Samurai by leaps and bounds. They begin to align themselves with the Taira family.

1156--

As the bureaucracy weakens through neglect and attacks by Ninja who are protesting unfair laws and Buddhist persecution, a military class emerges to manage provincial affairs. A struggle for court control pits the Minamoto family against the ruling Taira family. The Taira hold sway from 1160 to 1180 when Kaseda Ninja, Urakawa Ninja and the Koga Ishibashiyama Ninja sub-group withdraw their secret support of the Taira and realign themselves with the Minamoto clan.

1185--

The Minamoto clan receives from Ninja strategic intelligence which allows them to triumph after a five year war. Kamakura is established as the first military government. Power passes from the court aristocracy to the warrior class. Minamoto Yoritomo is named by the emperor as Japan's first Shogun (military ruler) in 1192. Yoritomo's vassals serve as provincial administrators. The term "Ninja" is coined (someone whose spirit and skills are sharper than the edge of a sword).

1191--

Zen Buddhism is introduced from China and embraced by the warrior class. The Zen concept of beauty through restraint finds expression in No theater, rock gardens, ink paintings and flower arranging. Zen priests import tea as a stimulant to meditation and create the ritual tea service called "Cha-no-yu" as a ceremony of spiritual renewal. Meanwhile, the warrior class is becoming dependant upon Ninja. Over 25 different Ninja schools have sprung up. The Ninja groups and sub-groups now exceed several hundred.

1194--

The Koga and Iga schism occurs. The Iga, made up of the Oe, Momochi and Hattori clans break away from the original fifty Ninja-Yamabushi families. While the Koga cling to an

ideological class struggle, the Iga hire themselves out to the highest bidder. The Koga see this as a serious betrayal and sides are drawn in an internal struggle that is still present.

1274 and 1281--

Kublai Kahn fails to conquer Japan when Kamakazi (Divine Wind) or Typhoon storms destroy his invasion fleet. Blood is spilled between Koga and Iga. The majority of Koga-Ninja jonin (leaders) set into motion plans to contain the Oe, Momochi and Hattori clans and their followers who have established themselves in Iga Province. Thusly, these followers would come to be known as Iga and all others, by alliance, Koga (named after the Koga Ninja group, the largest and most powerful of the fifty Ninja groups).

1336--

A power struggle results in two imperial capitals for sixty years, and a new Shogunate. This Shogunate, the Ashikage, lasts until 1573. The Koga align themselves to the north, the Iga to the south.

1467--

The Onin War, a civil conflict, devastates Kyoto and heralds nearly a century of chronic civil strife. Iga Ninja are overpowered by Koga Ninja who battle at Sakata. The Koga credit their victory to Masahige Kusunoki, who founded the Kusunoki-ryu school of Ninjitsu and the first school of espionage in Japan..

1543--

Western commerce and Christianity arrive with Portuguese traders. The Ninja acquire guns and make use of optics by trading with the Portuguese on an almost exclusive basis.

1549--

St. Francis Xavier launches his jesuit mission. Ties are established in several port townships to solidify the Portuguese/Ninja relationship. These ties help to break down language and cultural obstacles. Forty-Nine Koga sub-groups defect to Iga under the pretense of the reward of great wealth and power. The Iga receive support of the Buddhists, who feel threatened by Koga ties with Christianity.

1560--

Military leader, Oda Nobunaga works to unify Japan, and enters into a secret series of treaties with Koga Ninja.

1581--

Nobunaga invades Iga province (spearheaded by Koga Ninja). Over 4,000 Iga Ninja are killed, their network compromised and leadership eliminated.

1582--

Nobunaga is assassinated. Toyotomi Hideyoshi rules in his place. He ostracizes Koga-Ninja by not keeping secret agreements made by Nobunaga. He is soon replaced by Ieyasu Tokugawa, who secretly makes a pact with the Koga-Ninja, forming an alliance in 1598. This alliance plays a decisive role in crushing Ieyasu's opposition in the battle of Sekigahara in 1600.

1603--

Ieyasu becomes Shogun and establishes the Tokugawa Shogunate. He makes the Koga-Ninja retainers. Later they will become his "Kagemusha" (shadow warriors) or secret police. Ninja Jonin begin their '300 year plan' for securing rights for all classes.

1604--

Seventh commemorative celebration at the Hokoku Shrine in honor of Hideyoshi. There, Koga-Ninja are ordered to hunt down Iga descendants.

1606--

Construction of the Hikone Castle by the Li clan takes place. This is done because of the Iga/Koga Ninja Hikone fortress, a stronghold seized by Ieyasu under Nobunaga at great cost in human lives.

1608--

Ikeda Terumasa rebuilds Himeji Castle and is given secret police powers by the Shogun. A Koga-Ninja school and a new line is established at the castle.

1609--

Permission is given to the Dutch to trade. Koga-Ninja help Merchants win favor and establish a trading factory at Hirado.

1610--

Koga-Ninja advise Ieyasu on the building and fortification of Nagoya Castle. He grants several Ninja families Samurai status. Several set up schools of Swordmanship.

1611--

Koga-Ninja are assigned to spy on Portugese who resume trade.

1612--

Prohibition of Christianity occurs. Permission for Chinese from Ming to trade at Nagasaki (capitol of Koga-Ninja Network) is granted.

1613--

Expulsion of missionaries and other Christians begins. Fearing further persecution, they establish ties, through traders, with Koga-Ninja.

1614--

Motsumoto Castle is completed. The Osaka Winter Campaign takes place. Koga-Ninja help persecuted Christians escape to Manila and Macao. Among these refugees is Takayama Ukon, who had been targeted for public execution.

1615--

Osaka Summer Campaign takes place. Koga Ninja enter battle, which leads to the downfall of the Toyotomi Clan. Ieyasu, with his Kagemusha (Koga Ninja) is now uncontested in supremacy. He promulgates the Laws of Military Houses (Buke Sho-hatto). Ieyasu expands the duties and powers of the Koga-Ninja.

1616--

The Bakufu restricts foreign trade to Nagasaki and Hirado (Ninja strongholds). Ieyasu dies.

1617--

Christian persecution is renewed. Dutch (through Ninja ties) are allowed to trade.

1618--

Nagasaki and Hirado (under Ninja supervision) is opened to trade with British.

1619--

Sixty Christians are burned at the stake in Kyoto; others flee with help of Koga-Ninja in Nagasaki.

1620--

A new school of Ninjitsu is set up with the construction of Katsura Rikyu. This school will spawn the Suminaga clan of Ninjitsu.

1622--

Koga Ninja expose a plot against the Shogun. Kimura Sebastian and fifty-four others are executed. There is great martyrdom in Nagasaki.

1623--

The British close their factory in Hirado and secretly escape with the aid of Koga-Ninja. Two traders are caught and burned at the stake by Samurai. They are joined by fifty Christians, who share the same fate in Edo.

1624--

Hidetada, now at the peak of his power as Shogun, orders all relations broken with the Spanish. This operation is to be overseen by the Koga-Ninja (Shadow Warriors). Kan'ei-ji Temple is built.

1625--

Koga-Ninja capture six Iga-Ninja and oversee Ni No Maru quarters built in Nijo Castle. Production of Higi pottery begins.

1628--

More Christians are persecuted in Nagasaki. Koga Ninja almost expose their secret actions when 12 Christians are captured and tortured. The Koga kill the torturers before the information of their secret hiding places and escape routes can be compromised.

1632--

Careful search for remaining Christians begins. Koga-Ninja intensify their secret efforts to hide the Christians. Good fortune shines on them when the Shogun places the Koga Ninja in full charge of the search.

1634--

Dejima is built at Nagasaki and all foreigners are forced to live there. Koga Ninja of Nagasaki intensify their relations with foreigners. Secret pacts are made in spite of efforts to force Christians to recant by trampling on the crucifix.

1635--

All foreign trading ships are restricted to Nagasaki a third Sakoku (isolation) edict. All Japanese overseas shipping and travel is prohibited, except for the Shogun's "Shadow Warriors" (Koga-Ninja). The Sankire-Kotai system is

institutionalized.

1636--

Kan'ei tsuho coins are minted. Famine occurs throughout Japan. Koga-Ninja ban together sharing food. Their alliances and ranks are expanding rapidly. Their sub-groups are nearly doubled.

1637--

The Shinabara Rebellion is suppressed. The Shogun's dependency on his Koga Yamabushi Ninja is intensified.

1639--

The Shogunate orders all daimyos to ban Christianity in their domains. The Koga-Ninja are empowered to secretly execute all who may oppose them or those who may be obstacles to the Shogun's decree. The Portuguese are expelled.

1640--

Other Europeans are expelled. Portuguese envoys from Macao are beheaded. Foreigners are hidden by Fukushima Ninja at Matsumae.

1641--

Dutch area moved from Hirado to Dejima in Nagasaki. They are protected by the Koga-Ninja who are now in positions of authority.

1642

There is famine throughout Japan. Many Dutch intermarry with Koga-Ninja. Some secretly leave Japan.

1647--

Portuguese ship visits Nagasaki and demands trade. Shogun refuses, but secretly allows his Shadow Warriors to trade.

1649--

Koga-Ninja capture and kill the last of the Hattori Clan of the Iga. Promulgation of the Laws Of Ordinances of Keian (Keian Oturegaki) takes place.

1650--

Koga-Ninja save Mitsutomo Tokugawa from assassination. He was to be killed during the popular pilgrimage to Ige-Jingu Shrine (Okagemain). The chronology of Japanese History, Honcho tsuran, is completed.

1651--

There is a revolt led by Yiu Shosetsu (Keian Jiken). Shosetsu is killed. Twelve Bisen-Ninja are executed by Masuda Jonin (Ninja leaders) for plotting against the Tokugawa family of Owari.

1654--

Fukushima Ninja escort Zen priest, Ingen when he arrives in Nagasaki from Ming. He founds Obaku sect of Zen.

1655--

In the beginning of the construction of Shugakurn Rikyu, Ninja and their families are empowered with "special privileges" by the Shogunate.

1657--

There is a terrible fire in Edo (Great Fire of Meireki). Koga-Ninja help restore order and organize builders for reconstruction. Many historical Ninja artifacts are lost to the blaze.

1658--

Execution of six hundred and thirty Christians takes place on the orders of Omura Suminaga. Ninja help many converts by establishing hiding places in Kaseda.

1659--

Ingen receives protection by Ninja after threats of violence during the building of the Mampuku-ji Temple.

1660--

This year marks the rise of the Mito school of historians under the leadership of Tokugawa Mitsukuni. This is done to promote learning and Shinto studies.

1668--

On the advice of the Koga-Ninja, there is reconstruction of the Ashikage school.

1673--

Desiring to keep trade with foreigners exclusively theirs, Ninja plot and execute secret actions which result in failure for Great Britain to renew trade.

1678--

There is a great earthquake in Edo. Ninja healing techniques win favor from many who are healed by Ninja/Kunoichi, who set up make-shift hospitals. A Ninja healer is assigned to the Shogun at his request.

1680--

Ninja expose a corrupt administration enjoying great freedom in social mores.

1684--

A new calendar (Jokyoreki) is adopted. The Haiku anthology, Fuyu no hi (A Winter Day), by Matsuo Basho is completed. Koga-Ninja stop the assassination plot of the Iga Fuku hara and Takamatsu clans against Tsunanari Tokugawa.

1687--

Shogun Tsunayoshi's "Dog Decrees" (laws prohibiting the killing of animals) are enacted. Koga track down Iga-Ninja who live in Dewa. Twelve Iga families are slain, just in time as they discover a plot to bomb the Imperial Palace.

1690--

E. Kaempfer comes to Japan as the physician to the Dejima factory. Koga Ninja place poison on the claws of eight domesticated hawks. These hawks are trained to attack horsemen.

1694--

The Kamo festival is restored. Eight overly cruel Samurai are killed by poisoned-clawed, Ninja hawks.

1701--

Ogata Korin is given the title of Hokkyo. Asano Takumi No Kami strikes at Kira Kozukenosuke in Edo Castle. Yoshimichi Tokugawa dispatches Ninja to protect Mito family members in Edo.

1702--

Clan chronology, Hankanfu by Arai Hakuseki, sees completion. A revised map of all Japan is completed. Ninja set up their own cross-country communication network with use of signal fires.

1707--

Mt. Fuji erupts. Nara-Ninja clans absorb homeless clan members, victims of eruption.

1709--

The Dog Decrees are abolished. There is reaction against the laxity of the Tsumayoshi regime. Financial reforms are attempted. Bisen and Harima Ninja capture sixty bandits preying upon travelers to Osaka by way of Kyoto.

1714--

There is widespread famine. Gold and silver is re-coined (Shotoku kingin). Ninja befriend traders at Nagasaki, feeding them out of huge food stockpiles.

1715--

Completion of Dai Nihonshi (Great History of Japan) is commenced by Mitsukuni Mito. There is promulgation of new laws governing Nagasaki. Ninja enjoy wealth as a result of their long time relationship with traders.

1716--

Ninja are instrumental in the relaxation of edicts against Western learning. Attempts are made to strengthen national administration (this marks beginning of Kyoho reform).

1721--

Regulation of prices charged by rice dealers in Osaka is begun. Ninja expose price manipulation by two daimyos. This results in the daimyo's disgrace and death.

1734--

Permission is given for daimyos to dispatch troops to suppress riots. Many of the riots are started by Ninja who use the confusion to free imprisoned Christians and peasants who could not pay taxes.

1738--

Ninja oversee a census taken in every province.

1739--

Russian ships make several appearances off Mutsu and Awa; Ninja are dispatched to investigate. The army is put at their disposal, as rumors of invasion reach the Shogun.

1742--

There are great floods in the Kinki and Kanto regions. Many Koga archives are destroyed. The majority of the

remaining Ninja records are moved to Nagasaki.

1750--

Another census is taken in every province. Ninja become fearful of information gathering techniques. They choose to participate directly.

1755--

There is a great famine in the Ou region. Many Ninja feed starving peasants who, in turn, swear allegiance. Ninja become all-powerful in the region. Sub-groups in the area double and ranks triple.

1756--

To keep prices low, restrictions on rice dealers (to prevent a monopoly) are enforced by Ninja.

1765--

Nishiki-e form of color print is developed by Suzuki Harunobu. Ninja assassinate two powerful bandit leaders at Sakaiminato.

1767--

This marks the beginning of the golden age of liberal administrator, Tanuma Okitsugu. Kurashiki-Ninja and Wakayama-Ninja (Koga groups) feud.

1771--

First anatomical dissection of a cadaver is performed by Maeno Ryotaku and others at the execution of a criminal at Kotsukappara. Wakayama clan of Ninja gathers support of Fukushima and Bisen clans to defeat Kurashiki Ninja.

1774--

There is a publication of a text on anatomy. Western learning is encouraged. Ninja training is expanded to include Western medicine, through the Kaitai Shinsho.

1782--

Marks the beginning of great famine of Tenmei era. Ninja make Nagasaki the official capital of Ninja Jonin. Many clan members of separate sub-groups migrate to Nagasaki.

1783--

Shiba Kokan begins to produce etchings. Matsudaira Sadanobu attempts economic and social reforms. Ninja cultivate the growing feelings against the Shogunate.

1786--

Tanuma Okitsugu is dismissed. Ninja vote to lead and organize peasants in revolt. The Jonin of Koga alliance veto the decision, based on the 300 year plan.

1788--

There is a great fire in Kyoto. Ninja set fire to Nijo Castle, destroying evidence and lists of suspected Ninja families not loyal to the Shogunate.

1790--

Despite prohibition of foreign trade studies, Ninja continue studying western science.

1791--

American and Russian ships visit Japan, but are driven away. Before they leave, however, they are contacted by Nagasaki Ninja. Decrees against foreign trade are re-issued.

1792--

Hayashi Shibei is captured by Ninja, and prosecuted for a military work, Kaikoku Heidan.

1794--

There is a great fire in Edo. Ninja Jonin move to Nagasaki and Masuda.

1797--

American ship Eliza calls at Nagasaki and is allowed to trade;. Several Ninja sign aboard this ship. They will not return until ten years later.

1800--

Ninja Ino Tadataka begins topological and cartographical survey of Ezo (Ou region and Hokkaido).

1801--

Ninja Ino Tadataka ordered to survey Japan's coastline.

1803--

American ships again visit Nagasaki, but are refused trade by the Shogunate. Ninja establish secret relations and trade for guns and cannons.

1804--

Resanov, Russian diplomat arrives at Nagasaki, and through Ninja contacts an audience with the Shogunate is arranged. Rezanov's demands for trade are rejected.

1805--

Ninja leader is named manager of the Kanto area.

1808--

Discovery of the Mamiya Straits is made. Takeda Izumo, Ninja Jonin to the Shogun Ienari is murdered by an archer. Reprisals are taken and after the conspirators are found, over sixty families are assassinated. This action, taken as reprisals, is supported by the Shogun.

1811--

Russian Naval officer, V. Golovnin and others are taken prisoner by Ninja and held in Matsumae (modern Hakodate).

1812--

Takataya Kahei, a bakufu trader, is arrested by Russians. Ninja are sent to rescue him.

1814--

British ship arrives at Nagasaki, Sir Stamford Raffles sends the ship to trade secretly with Ninja. He attempts to bypass the Ninja and directly contact the Shogun, but is stopped by Bisen Ninja. The ship is forced to sail empty handed, and with half rations, leaving Ninja more than displeased with Raffle's ambitions.

1818--

Englishman Gordon arrives at Uraga for trade but is officially rebuffed by the Shogunate. Ninja are ordered to assassinate Gordon by leading daimyos. They refuse and face death sentences. Ninja Jonin and the Shogun intervene on the Ninja's behalf.

1819--

Completion of the "Dai-Nihon enkaikochi-zenzu" (coastal map of Japan) takes place.

1823--

P.F. Von Siebold comes to Nagasaki, finding protection through Ninja Jonin.

1825--

Edict is made to expel all foreign ships. First Kabuki play is performed. Ninja Jonin, Iku, is honored by the Shogun, Inerai.

1831--

Ninja help restore order after peasant uprisings in Choshu province.

1834--

Mitzuno Tadakuni, envoy to Ninja Jonin, becomes an elder in Shogun's council. School of Minokama Ninjitsu is founded. The school stresses the study of meteorology and archery.

1838--

The Shogunate runs into financial troubles. There is another peasant uprising in Sado. The 300 year plan is taking effect and gaining momentum as journaled by Jonin Ninja leader, Naruto.

1839--

Watanabe Kazan, Takano Choei and others are punished for demand opening of Japan to foreign commerce (Bansha No Goku). Several Samurai supporters are assassinated. The conspirators are revealed by the Shogun's Ninja and disgraced.

1840--

Ninja oversee census taken in every province.

1841--

Ninja inspire Mizuno Tadakuni to begin an attempt at economic and political reform (Tempo reforms).

1842--

Permission is given to supply water and fuel to foreign ships. Ninja are put in charge of overseeing the operation.

1844--

French ship visits Ryukyus for trade. Two Ninja sign aboard and return twelve years later. One will establish the Nakamura school of Ninjitsu. This school emphasizes seamanship and raiding of sailing vessels.

1846--

American warships come to Uraga and demand trade. Ninja clans ban together at the port, unaware that secret negotiations had taken place years earlier between ships captains and Jonin Ninja at Nagasaki.

1853--

Commodore Matthew Perry arrives with Black Ships off of Uraga. Russian Admiral Putyatin arrives in Nagasaki. Both secretly confer with sympathetic Jonin Ninja. Putyatin is rescued from assassin by Kumano Ninja.

1856--

Townsend Harris comes to Shimoda as consul-general of United States. Ninja/Kunoichi act as interpreter. Ninja are assigned to guard Harris.

1858--

Treaty of Amity and Commerce with U.S.A. is made. Ninja help suppress Sonno-joi (revere the emperor, expel the barbarian) movement. Ninja meet with the emperor and secure secret treaties in exchange for services in a powerplay against the Shogunate. Ninja help foreigners settle in Kobe under their protection.

1859--

Kanagawa, Nagasaki and Hakodate are opened to foreign trade with Russia, France, Britain, Holland and America. Yoshida Shoin and others are captured and executed by Ninja.

1860--

Naosuke is assassinated by 17 Samurai of Mito fief (Sakuradamongai no hen). Ninja strengthen relations with foreigners and the emperor. -

1864--

Allied fleets of four countries fire on Shimonoseki in Chosu province (War of Shimonoseki). Chosu clan submits to Shogunate. Secret agreements are made between Chosu clan and Ninja.

1866--

Marks the conclusion of military alliance between Satsuma and Chosu clans. Secret agreements to abolish feudalism are reached between the emperor and Ninja leaders, who set into motion the final phase of the 300 year plan.

1867--

Imperial rule replaces the Shogunate. Armed conflict breaks out between Shogunate troops and loyalists. Feudalism is abolished. Ninja are dispatched by the Emperor to organize loyalists.

1868--

Edo is renamed Tokyo. Battle of Toba-Fushimi, near Kyoto takes place. Ninja spies reveal information which changes the course of battle. Emperor Meiji, brought to power in the Meiji Restoration, oversees an era of rapid modernization from the new capital of Tokyo. Ninja are instrumental in education reform. The emperor honors Ninja treaties which call for an Imperial edict abolishing the Samurai-class status.

1877--

The last and greatest Samurai revolt occurs. Knowledge of modern warfare by Ninja leads to the bloody and humiliating defeat of the Samurai. Two-thousand Ninja hold off forty-thousand Samurai until loyalists can organize and reinforce strategic strongholds.

1885--

Prime Minister and cabinet are appointed in this year. Ninja Chunin (sub-leaders) are appointed to key military positions.

1889--

A constitution is drafted. Ninja ranks are diminished. Twenty Koga-Ninja schools close.

1890--

The Diet, a parliament, is elected. A majority of Koga-Ninja move to Nagasaki and Kobe. Trading becomes their main source of income.

1894--

Tactics from the Yoshitsune-ryu school of Ninjitsu are adopted by the military. Many Ninja families, holding key military positions, influence the success of the Sino-Japanese War (1894 to 1895).

1901--

Kokuryukai (Black Dragon Society) is founded by Ninja members of the Genyosha.

1905--

Most major Ninja clans are unable to fill their ranks. Many leave Japan, while others make use of their talents in

the military. The Japanese-Russo War (1904-1905) ends. Japan wins overseas territory which signals Japan's emergence as a world power. Senzo Tanaka, of Jonin Ninja family, is given audience by the Emperor. He becomes a public hero in Nagasaki.

1910--

Ninja clans are reduced to a handful after Jonin leaders confer and agree that 300 year plan (laid down in 1600) is a success. The caste system is abolished. Communication between the Emperor and his Ninja allies is suspended by Ninja Jonin.

1912--

Ninja training is reserved as a family discipline. All formal schools are closed.

1926--

Emperor Hirohito resigns.

1931--

The Depression fuels the rise of nationalistic military leaders, who occupy Manchuria and assassinate the Prime Minister. Many Ninja families resign their positions in the military; others, through trading ties at Nagasaki and Yokohama agree to spy against Japan for the British and Dutch.

1937--

Japan goes to war with China. Many Ninja families are separated as the men take refuge in the mountains, escaping conscription into the army.

1941--

Yoshitsune-ryu tactics are employed at Pearl Harbor in surprise attacks against American warships. However, the tactics are altered and will be the military's greatest mistake. British arrange Ninja contacts for American intelligence sources.

1945--

Japan surrenders after U.S. drops A-bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. With the destruction of the capital of Koga-Ninjutsu, lost forever are ancient scrolls and irreplaceable artifacts. Few Koga-Ninja survive.

1952--

Allied forces leave Japan. Many Ninja families, no longer

protected by the foreign influence, fear reprisals. Arrangements are made for them to leave Japan. Few will return. Many give up great wealth, their family having established 'Zaibatsu,' the great trading firms still in existence at Yokohama.

1973--

Senzo 'Tiger' Tanaka returns to Masuda with an American boy named Frank W. Dux. The occidental takes the traditional test to become the first foreigner to be awarded the title of "Soke" (successor) to the forty-generation, Tanaka-ryu family line of Ninjitsu. Dux is granted the the title of Ninja, and both he and Tanaka return to the United States. Dux's test is performed in the presence of nine Ninja Jonin elders. One of these elders was the former Jonin representative to the Emperor in 1910.

1975--

The title of Shidoshi is awarded to Mr. Frank W. Dux, who becomes the first non-oriental and first non-related by blood-line to achieve Jonin Ninja status. He forms the first Koga school of Ninjitsu since 1912. He also forms the first Western-ryu of Ninjitsu (Dux-ryu). Dux further achieves recognition as the first Ninja to compete and win the title of World Heavyweight Champion (1975-1980) in full-contact kumite (fighting without benefit of gloves or any other protective gear). He breaks four I.F.A.A. (International Fighting Arts Association) world records in a single tournament. He becomes the first modern Ninja to receive contractual agreements to train military and police personnel. He thereafter serves as a consultant to over twenty-five foreign (private and government) agencies

1980--

Dux retires undefeated as World Heavyweight Champion, and re-establishes public schooling of Ninjitsu on an international basis. He becomes a driving force behind Koga-Yamabushi Ninja descendants who train exclusively on an inter-family basis. Many feel he should return to the old ways. It is suggested that he not continue teaching. The popularity of Ninjitsu and self-proclaimed/pseudo Ninjas worries many Koga members. To protect their heritage and offset the imbalance, they encourage Dux to continue.

1982--

Dux is summoned to Masuda to receive ceremonial swords and the ashes of the Tanaka-ryu line from the Yagyu school of fencing. He is given audience with leading Ninja families at Iga-Ueno who urge him to move to Japan.

1984--

Koga-Yamabushi Ninja vote to remain anonymous. However, they give Dux final permission to continue teaching as he has redefined Ninjitsu's purpose not solely as self-defense or physical conditioning, but as a discipline to develop and enhance self-worth.

THE BAN SEN SHU KAI

These original works were compiled in the summer of 1676 by Yosuyoshi Fujibayashi. Fujibayashi was one of the many aliases employed by the Momochi clan, one of the two most influential Iga families. The name Fujibayashi was taken by those Momochi family/group members operating and living in Koga Province employing Koga Ninja sub-groups who had defected to the Iga.

Literally translated as "Ten Thousand Rivers Collect in the Sea," the Ban Sen Shu Kai is a collection of knowledge of Iga and Koga family systems. Unfortunately, it was not until recently that the true ownership of these documents was discovered.

In this author's opinion, "One of the major obstacles facing modern Ninjitsu's acceptance and growth are at the hands of self seeking opportunist's with a commercial axe to grind. The Ban Sen Shu Kai, amongst other 'public' historical documents and artifacts is just one example of corruption by those who display photographic copies of these artifacts and imply with white lies that these

historical items are in their sole possession or that of their clan/ryu. By parading these artifacts, those involved make use of the ploy of 'authenticity through association.' They are perceived as the 'real thing' because they are surrounded by rich historical artifacts."

FACT, the Ban Sen Shu Kai manuscripts were not handed down from one generation to another by members of a particular Ninja ryu/clan as alledged to this author and others by a leading member of the Ninja Togakure-ryu (Iga clan) system; who implies it is in their sole possession.

FACT, the Ban Sen Shu Kai manuscripts are the possesion of the Katsui O'Hara family. Books this author was able to obtain, copies made, which revealed it's historical writings as logical and systematic but an example, when compared to purely Koga Masuda group manuscripts (dated twenty years prior), such as the "Koga Hichi No Kage" (The Seven Shadows of Koga). The comparison reveals the Iga to be quiet inferior in tactics and strategy. However, the historical importance of this 17th century encyclopedia of ninjitsu makes for fascinating reading.

Volume one, "Jo"--contains an introduction, historical examples, an index of contents, a question and answer section plus the principle philosophy of the Iga Ninja. The Iga Ninja is admonished to remember there can be no dissention amongst the ranks if a Ninja leader is to defeat with the few the many. One spy or counteracting agent can bring the downfall of an entire army or Ninja network. (A

lesson the Iga learned at the hands of the Koga operating and employing Mashige Kusunoki's counter-intelligence tactics; tactics which led to the Iga's ultimate downfall at the hands of the Koga and Nobunaga Ode in 1581).

Volume two, "Sho Shin"--discusses the sincerity, morality and intention necessary for being Ninja. This volume gave the Iga ninja recruit a reason, a purpose that would sustain him through acts of treachery, deception, theft and fraud, not to mention cold blooded and premeditated murder, irregardless of age or sex. The first step in the Iga "Ninjutsu" education is to clear up any mental or spiritual cloudiness. (Especially necessary since the Iga hired themselves out as assassins to the Highest Bidder).

Volume three, "Sho Chi"--reveals the methods on which the Iga managed their organization and ways of successfully employing Ninja. This text also describes countermeasures for preventing enemy agents from working into the Ninja leaders own organization.

Volume four, "Yo Nin"--is an understanding of "In" and "Yo" (Yin and Yang in Chinese) is crucial in the IGA system, promoting Shingen Buddhism. It primarily deals with the "white" or "bright" side of IGA ninjutsu. The bright side represents dynamic and positive power of the intellect and creative thinking. The Ninja can obtain the intelligence information one needs without becoming physically involved

in the spying activity. He directly or indirectly employs others to gain in his knowledge for him. The Ninja then knows how to handle the enemy aided by the knowledge of the enemies strength's or weaknesses. Methods of knowing the enemy's intentions without taking an active part in combat action include:

"TO NYU HEN" - continuous observation through agents placed during peacetime

"ME KIKI HEN" - observation of enemy geographical layout

"KIN NYU HEN" - location of agents placed during wartime

"MI WAKE HEN" - detailed observation of enemy force numbers, capabilites, along with other details of enemy strength.

"KAN MI HEN" - observation of the enemies strategy and positioning.

Volumes five, six and seven, "In Nin"--deal with the "In" the "black" or "dark" side of the Ninja's power. They are manuals dealing with stealth, deception, confusion tactics; the Ninja could bring the enemy under his control.

Employing methods that the Samurai (bound by Bushido) considered to be dishonorable, contemptible, and cowardly. The volumes include unique methods of the IGA Ninja's

fighting system (both individual and collective). The techniques themselves are often presented in cryptic or poetic wordings to prevent the uninitiated from picking up the manuscript and learning the secrets. The Ban Sen Shu Kai's techniques of "In Nin" (darkness) are actually code words and jargon in catalog form. Some may argue to serve as reminders for qualified Ninja. Only by studying with legitimate teachers can the student come to know the true meaning of the technique descriptions. COMMON SENSE tells us that since the material is coded, one who protests that he is the only legitimate practitioner and the only one who can interpret the information, therefore can twist the meanings/jargon to serve their own ends. After all, who's left to check it? Perhaps, a better example would be examining one passage where the Ninja is reminded to rely on "murasame no jitsu" or the "art of the village rain". The passage is so vague one can twist its meaning to mean anything or serve anyone--thusly, to be Ninja is in the doing-not armed with babbling scrolls!

Volume eight, "Ten Ji"--covers the Ninja's methods for interpreting and evaluating conditions in the environment. The volume includes weather forecasting, tide tables, moon phases, land navigation based on determination of direction and location by observing the stars. This volume is based on generations of experience with such systems, such as:

"GO GYO SETSU" - theory of the five elements

"IN YO DO" - taoism

"YI" - the I CHING book of changes

Included and coded is the explanation that the information presented is derived from scientific observation and folk lore, as well as Tibetan and Chinese systems of divination.

Volume nine, "Nin Ki"--a discription of IGA Ninja gear begins in this volume and continues on into the tenth volume which is labled "Ka Ki" (the tail) rather than volume 10. This is done perhaps in keeping with the IGA Ninja's superstitions reliance on the number 9 as a means of inspiration and guidance for enlightenment. This manuscript is broken up into three works of importance"

"TO KI" - covers the climbing gear of ninjitsu, including a wide variety of equipment used to get Ninja safely up and down castle walls, trees, cliffs, and the sides of ships.

"SUI KI" - covers water gear of ninjitsu. The equipment described provides numerous methods for crossing over or moving under bodies of water. This is based largely on the practical advice by pirates.

"KA KI" - covers a collection of tools for the purpose of breaking into locked or fortified buildings, castles, and storage areas. Equipment for picking locks, boring through or under walls and moving doors are described.

The 10th manuscript "Kai Ki"-- (the tail), referred to as "fire gear" covers formulas and their preparation and use of explosives, smoke bombs, sleeping potions, medicines and poisons. The explicit directions are written in the IGA regional dialect of 17th century Japan. This makes translation a slow and difficult task. For example, one formula calls for "bears paw," however this refers to an herb, not the foot of an animal.

LOCATION OF THE NINJA
INFLUENCE (1600)

Location of Iga Clans (three groups) the Iga had over seven sub-groups.

Location of the Koga Clans (fifty groups) in order of power. The Koga alone had over 200 sub-groups. Overall, the Koga controlled through their (fifty group) alliance over 1700 different sub-groups.

1. Koga
2. Bisen
3. Erazen
4. Haguro
5. Nakagana
6. Uesugi
7. Masuda
8. Kuroda
9. Fukushima
10. Kasuga
11. Kasaoka
12. Eiheiji / Matsuto
13. Yazawa
14. Aikawa
15. Fujiyoshida
16. Katsuura
17. Goshogawara
18. Fukaura
19. Eniwa

- 20. Embetsu
- 21. Urakawa
- 22. Wassamu
- 23. Wakayama
- 24. Kobayashi
- 25. Kaseda
- 26. Himeji
- 27. Ayabe / Fukuchiyama
- 28. Kariya
- 29. Ueda
- 30. Kakizaki
- 31. Tono
- 32. Miyako
- 33. Misawa
- 34. Sakata
- 35. Ashikage
- 36. Katori
- 37. Takayama
- 38. Yazawa / Tokamachi
- 39. Murayama
- 40. Noto
- 41. Saito
- 42. Hirata
- 43. Kurayoshi
- 44. Nichinan
- 45. Saito
- 46. Saiki

47. Yamaga

48. Tokushima

49. Shingu

50. Matsusaka

